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LUTHER

BY

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VOL. V.

THE REFORMER (III)

LUTHER

CHAPTER XXIX

ETHICAL RESULTS OF THE NEW TEACHING

1. Preliminaries. New Foundations of Morality

LUTHER'S system of ethics mirrors his own character. If Luther's personality, in all its psychological individuality, shows itself in his dogmatic theology (see vol. iv., p. 387 ff.), still more is this the case in his ethical teaching. To obtain a vivid picture of the mental character of their author and of the inner working of his mind, it will suffice to unfold his practical theories in all their blatant contradiction and to examine on what they rest and whence they spring. First and foremost we must investigate the starting-point of his moral teaching.

To begin with, it was greatly influenced by his theory that the Gospel consisted essentially in forgiveness, in the cloaking over of guilt and in the soothing of "troubled consciences." Thanks to a lively faith to reach a feeling of confidence, is, according to him, the highest achievement of ethical effort. At the same time, however, Luther lets it be clearly understood that we can never get the better of sin. In the shape of original sin it ever remains; concupiscence is always sinful; and, even in the righteous, actual sin persists, only that its cry is drowned by the voice speaking from the Blood of Christ. Man must look upon himself as entirely under the domination of the devil, and, only in so far as Christ ousts the devil from his human stronghold, can a man be entitled to be called good. In himself he is not even free to do what is right.

To the author of such doctrines it was naturally a matter of some difficulty to formulate theoretically the injunctions of morality. Some Protestants indeed vaunt his system of ethics as the best ever known, and as based on an entirely

" new groundwork." Many others, headed by Stäudlin the theologian, have nevertheless openly admitted that " no system of Christian morality could exist," granted Luther's principles.[1]

Of his principles the following must be borne in mind. Man's attitude towards things Divine is just that of the dumb, lifeless " pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was changed " ; " he is not one whit better off than a clod or stone, without eyes or mouth, without any sense and without a heart."[2] Human reason, which ought to govern moral action, becomes in matters of religion " a crazy witch and Lady Hulda,"[3] the " clever vixen on whom the heathen hung when they thought themselves cleverest."[4] Like reason, so the will too, in fallen man, behaves quite negatively towards what is good, whether in ethics or in religion. " We remain as passive," he says, " as the clay in the hands of the potter " ; freedom there is indeed, " but it is not under our control." In this connection he refers to Melanchthon's " *Loci communes*,"[5] whence some striking statements against free-will have already been quoted in the course of this work.[6]

It is only necessary to imagine the practical application of such principles to perceive how faulty in theory Luther's ethics must have been. Luther, however, was loath to see these principles followed out logically in practice.

Other theories of his which he applies either not at all or only to a very limited extent in ethics are, for instance, his opinions that the believer, " even though he commit sin, remains nevertheless a godly man," and, that, owing to our trusting faith in Christ, God can descry no sin in us " even when we remain stuck in our sins," because we " have donned the golden robe of grace furnished by Christ's Blood." In his Commentary on Galatians he had said : " Act as though there had never been any law or any sin but only grace and salvation in Christ " ;[7] he had declared

[1] " Gesch. der Moral," Göttingen, 1908, p. 209.
[2] Cp. the passages quoted in Möhler, " Symbolik," § 11.
[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 516 ; Erl. ed., 34, p. 138.
[4] *Ib.*, 10, 2, p. 295=16², p. 532.
[5] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 7.
[6] Vol. ii., p. 239 f. and vol. iv., p. 435. Cp. Luther's own words, *passim*, in our previous volumes.
[7] Comm. on Gal., Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 557 ; Irmischer, 2, p. 144.

that all the damned were predestined to hell, and, in spite of their best efforts, could not escape eternal punishment. (Vol. ii., pp. 268 ff., 287 ff.)

In view of all the above we cannot help asking ourselves, whence the moral incentive in the struggle against the depravity of nature is to come; where, granted that our will is unfree and our reason blind, any real ethical answerableness is to be found; what motive for moral conduct a man can have who is irrevocably predestined to heaven or to hell; and what grounds God has for either rewarding or punishing?

To add a new difficulty to the rest, Luther is quite certain of the overwhelming power of the devil. The devil sways all men in the world to such a degree, that, although we are "lords over the devil and death," yet "at the same time we lie under his heel . . . for the world and all that belongs to it must have the devil as its master, who is far stronger than we and clings to us with all his might, for we are his guests and dwellers in a foreign hostelry."[1] But because through faith we are masters, "my conscience, though it feels its guilt and fears and despairs on its account, yet must insist on being lord and conqueror of sin . . . until sin is entirely banished and is felt no longer."[2] Yea, since the devil is so intent on affrighting us by temptations, "we must, when tempted, banish from sight and mind the whole Decalogue with which Satan threatens and plagues us so sorely."[3]

Such advice could, however, only too easily lead people to relinquish an unequal struggle with an unquenchable Concupiscence and an overwhelmingly powerful devil, or, to lose sight of the distinction between actual sin and our mere natural concupiscence, between sin and mere temptation; Luther failed to see that his doctrines would only too readily induce an artificial confidence, and that people would put the blame for their human frailties on their lack of freedom, their ineradicable concupiscence, or on the almighty devil.

How, all this notwithstanding, he contrived to turn his back on the necessary consequences of his own teaching, and to evolve a practical system of ethics far better than what his theories would have led us to expect, is plain from his

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 36, p. 495; Erl. ed., 51, p. 90. Cp. our vol. iv., p. 436. [2] *Ib.*, p. 495=91.
[3] To Hier. Weller (July ?), 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 159.

warm recommendation of good works, of chastity, neighbourly love and other virtues.

In brief, he taught in his own way what earlier ages had also taught, viz. that sin and vice must be shunned; in his own way he exhorted all to practise virtue, particularly to perform those deeds of brotherly charity reckoned so high in the Church of yore. In what follows we shall have to see how far his principles nevertheless intervened, and how much personal colouring he thereby imparted to his system of ethics. In so doing what we must bear in mind is his own way of viewing the aims of morality and practical matters generally, for here we are concerned, not with the results at which he should logically have arrived, but with the opinions he actually held.

The difficulty of the problem is apparent not merely from the nature of certain of his theological views just stated, but particularly from what he thought concerning original sin and concupiscence, which colours most of his moral teaching.

In his teaching, as we already know, original sin remains, even after baptism, as a real sin in the guise of concupiscence; by its evil desires and self-seeking it poisons all man's actions to the end of his life, except in so far as his deeds are transformed by the "faith" from above into works pleasing to God, or rather, are accounted as such. Owing to the enmity to God which prevails in the man who thus groans under the weight of sin even "civil justice is mere sinfulness; it cannot stand before the absolute demands of God. All that man can do is to acknowledge that things really are so and to confess his unrighteousness."[1] Such an attitude Luther calls "humility." Catholic moralists and ascetics have indeed ever made all other virtues to proceed from humility as from a fertile source, but there is no need to point out how great is the difference between Luther's "humility" and that submission of the heart to God's will of which Catholic theologians speak. Humility, as Luther understood it, was an "admission of our corruption"; according to him it is our recognition of the enduring character of original sin that leads us to God and compels us "to admit the revelation of the Grace of God bestowed on us in Christ's work of redemption," by means

[1] W. Braun, "Die Bedeutung der Concupiscenz in Luthers Leben und Lehre," Berlin, 1908, p. 310.

of "faith, i.e. security of salvation." It is possible to speak "only of a gradual restraining of sin," so strongly are we drawn to evil. We indeed receive grace by faith, but of any infused grace or blotting out of sin, Luther refuses to hear, since the inclinations which result from original sin still persist. Hence "by grace sin is not blotted out." Rather, the grace which man receives is an imputed grace; "the real answer to the question as to how Luther arrived at his conviction that imputed grace was necessary and not to be escaped is to be found in his own inward experience that the tendencies due to original sin remain, even in the regenerate. This sin, which persists in the baptised, . . . forces him, if he wishes to avoid the pitfall of despair . . . to keep before his mind the consoling thought . . . 'that God does not impute to him his sin.'"[1]

2. The two Poles: the Law and the Gospel

One of the ethical questions that most frequently engaged Luther's attention concerned the relation of Law and Gospel. In reality it touched the foundations of his moral teaching.

His having rightly determined how Law and Gospel stood seemed to him one of his greatest achievements, in fact one of the most important of the revelations made to him from on High. "Whoever is able clearly to distinguish the Law from the Gospel," he says, "let such a one give thanks to God and know that he is indeed a theologian."[2] Alluding to the vital importance of Luther's theory on the Law with its demands and the Gospel with its assurance of salvation, Friedrich Loofs, the historian of dogma, declares: Here "may be perceived the fundamental difference between the Lutheran and the Catholic conception of Christianity,"[3] though he does not fear to hint broadly at the "defects" and "limitations" of Luther's new discovery; rather he admits quite openly, that some leading aspects of the question "never even revealed themselves clearly" to Luther, but betray a "notable" lack of discernment, and that Luther's whole conception of the Law contained "much that called for further explanation."[4]

[1] Braun, *ib.*, p. 310–312.
[2] "Comm. on Gal.," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 207; Irmischer, 1, p. 172.
[3] "Leitfaden zum Stud. der DG," Halle, 1906, p. 722.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 770 f., 773 f., 778.

In order to give here a clearer picture of Luther's doctrine on this matter than it was possible to do in the earlier passages where his view was touched upon it may be pointed out, that, when, as he so frequently does, he speaks of the Law he means not merely the Old-Testament ceremonial and judicial law, but even the moral law and commands both of the Old Covenant[1] and of the New,[2] in short everything in the nature of a precept binding on the Christian the infringement of which involves him in guilt; he means, as he himself expresses it, "everything . . . that speaks to us of our sins and of God's wrath."[3]

By the Gospel moreover he understands, not merely the promises contained in the New Testament concerning our salvation, but also those of the Old Covenant; he finds the Gospel everywhere, even previous to Christ: "There is not a book in the Bible," he says, "which does not contain them both [the Law and the Gospel]. God has thus placed in every instance, side by side, the Law and the promises, for, by the Law, He teaches what we are to do, and, by the promises, how we are to set about it." In his church-postils where this passage occurs Luther explains more fully what he means by the "promise," or Gospel, as against the Law: It is the "glad tidings whereby grace and forgiveness of sins is offered. Hence works do not belong to the Gospel, for it is no law, but faith only [is required], for it is simply a promise and an offer of Divine grace. Whoever believes it receives the grace."[4]

As to the relationship between the Law and the Gospel: Whereas the Law does not express the relation between God and man, the Gospel does. The latter teaches us that we may, nay must, be assured of our salvation previous to any work of ours, in order, that, born anew by such faith, we may be ready to fulfil God's Will as free, Christian men. The Law, on the other hand, reveals the Will of God, on pedagogic grounds, as the foundation of a system of merit or reward. It is indeed necessary as a negative preparation for faith, but its demands cannot be complied with by the natural man, to say nothing of the fact that it seems to make certainty of salvation, upon which everything depends in

[1] Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 771, n. 4.
[2] But cp. what Loofs says, *ib.*, p. 772, n. 5.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 153. [4] *Ib.*, 10^2, p. 96

our moral life, contingent on the fulfilment of its prescriptions.[1]

From this one can see how inferior to the Gospel is the Law. The Law speaks of "*facere, operari,*" of "deeds and works" as essential for salvation. "These words"—so Luther told the students in his Disputations in 1537 on the very eve of the Antinomian controversy—"I should like to see altogether banished from theology; for they imply the notions of merit and duty ("*meritum et debitum*"), which is beyond toleration. Hence I urge you to refrain from the use of such terms."[2]

What he here enjoins he had himself striven to keep in view from the earliest days of his struggle against "self-righteousness" and "holiness-by-works." These he strove to undermine, in the same measure as he exalted original sin and its consequences. Psychologically his attitude in theology towards these questions was based on the renegade monk's aversion to works and their supposed merit. His chief bugbear is the meritoriousness of any keeping of the Law. For one reason or another he went further and denied even its binding character ("*debitum*"); caught in the meshes of that pseudo-mystic idealism to which he was early addicted we hear him declaring: the Christian, when he is justified by "faith," does of his own accord and without the Law everything that is pleasing to God; what is really good is performed without any constraint out of a simple love for what is good. In this wise it was that he reached his insidious thesis, viz. that the believer stands everywhere above the Law and that the Christian knows no Law whatever.[3] In quite general terms he teaches that the Law is in opposition to the Gospel; that it does not vivify but kills; and that its real task is merely to frighten us, to show us what we are unable to do, to reveal sin and "increase it." The preaching of the Law he here depicts, not as "good and profitable, but as actually harmful," as "nothing but death and poison."[4]

That such a setting aside of the specifically Mosaic Law appealed to him, we can readily understand. But does he

[1] Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 721 f.

[2] "Disput.," ed. P. Drews, p. 159; cp. *ib.*, pp. 126, 136 f., 156.

[3] "*Dixi . . . quod christianus nullam prorsus legem habeat, sed quod tota illi lex abrogata sit cum suis terroribus et vexationibus.*" "Comm. on Gal.," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 668 f.; Irmischer, 2, p. 263.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 238 f.

include in his reprobation the whole "*lex moralis*," the Natural Law which the Old Testament merely confirmed, and which, according to Luther himself, is written in man's heart by nature? This Law he asserts is implicitly obeyed as soon as the heart, by its acceptance of the assurance of salvation, is cleansed and filled with the love of God.[1] And yet "in many instances he applies to this Natural Law what he says elsewhere of the Law of Moses; it too affrights us, increases sin, kills, and stands opposed to the Gospel."[2] Desirous of destroying once and for all any idea of righteousness or merit being gained through any fulfilment of any Law, he forgets himself, in his usual way, and says strong things against the Law which scarcely agree with other statements he makes elsewhere.

Owing to polemists taking too literally what he said, he has been represented as holding opinions on the Law and the Gospel which in point of fact he does not hold; indeed, some have made him out a real Antinomian. Yet we often hear him exhorting his followers to bow with humility to the commandments, to bear the yoke of submission and thus to get the better of sin and death. Nevertheless, particularly when dealing with those whose "conscience is affrighted," he is very apt to forget what he has just said in favour of the Law, and prefers to harp on his pet theology: "Man must pay no heed to the Law but only to Christ." "In dealing with this aspect of the matter we cannot speak too slightingly of so contemptuous a thing [as the Law]."[3]

His changeableness and obscurity on this point is characteristic of his mode of thought.

At times he actually goes so far as to ascribe to the Law merely an outward, deterrent force and to make its sole value in ordinary life consist in the restraining of evil. Even when he is at pains to emphasise the "real, theological" use of the Law as preparatory to grace, he deliberately introduces statements concerning

[1] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 24, p. 10; Erl. ed., 33, p. 13. Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 764, n. 2.

[2] Loofs, *ib.*, p. 773, where he cites the "Comm. on Gal." (1535), Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 209; Irmischer, 1, p. 174.

[3] "*Quia Paulus hic versatur in loco iustificationis, . . . necessitas postulabat, ut de lege tamquam de re contemptissima loqueretur, neque satis viliter et odiose, cum in hoc argumento versamur, de ea loqui possumus.*" "Comm. on Gal.," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 557; Irmischer, 2, p. 144. "*Conscientia perterrefacta . . . nihil de lege et peccato scire debet, sed tantum de Christo.*" *Ib.*, p. 207 f. –p. 173 *sq.* Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 279 f. ("Tischreden") and "Opp. lat. var." 4, p. 427.

the Law which do not at all help to explain the matter. According to him, highly as we must esteem the Law for its sacred character, its effect upon people who are unable to keep it is nevertheless not wholesome but rather harmful, because thereby sin is multiplied, particularly the sin of unbelief, i.e. as seen in want of confidence in the certainty of salvation and in the striving after righteousness by the exact fulfilling of the Law.[1] "Whoever feels contrition on account of the Law," he says for instance, "cannot attain to grace, on the contrary he is getting further and further away from it."[2]

Even for the man who has already laid hold on salvation by the "*fides specialis*" and has clothed himself in Christ's merits, the deadening and depraving effect of the Law has not yet ceased. It is true that he is bound to listen to the voice of the Law and does so with profit in order to learn "how to crucify the flesh by means of the spirit, and direct his steps in the concerns of this life." Yet—and on this it is that Luther dwells—because the pious man is quite unable to fulfil the Law perfectly, he is only made sensible of his own sinfulness; against this dangerous feeling he must struggle.[3] Hence everything depends on one's ability to set oneself with Christ above the Law and to refuse to listen to its demands; for Christ, Who has taken the whole load upon Himself, bears the sin and has fulfilled the Law for us.[4] That this, however, was difficult, nay, frequently, quite impossible, Luther discovered for himself during his inward struggles, and made no odds in admitting it. He gives a warning against engaging in any struggles with our conscience, which is the herald of the Law; such contests "often lead men to despair, to the knife and the halter."[5] Of the manner in which he dealt with his own conscience we shall, however, speak more in detail below (XXIX, 6).

It is not necessary to point out the discrepancies and contradictions in the above train of thought. Luther was untiring in his efforts at accommodation, and, whenever he wished, had plenty to say on the matter. Here, even more plainly than elsewhere, we see both his lack of system and the irreconcilable contradictions lying in the very core of his ethics and theology. Friedrich Loofs says indulgently: "Dogmatic theories he had none; without over much theological reflection he simply gives expression to his religious convictions."[6]

It is strange to note how the aspect of the Law changes according as it is applied to the wicked or to the just, though it was given for the instruction and salvation of all alike. In the New Testament we read: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light,"

[1] Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 775. Luther here refers to Rom. v. 20; vii. 9, etc.

[2] "*Contritus lege tantum abest ut perveniat ad gratiam, ut longius ab ea discedat.*" "Disput.," ed. P. Drews, p. 284.

[3] "Comm. on Gal.," Weim. ed., 2, p. 498; 40, 1, p. 208; Irmischer, 3, p. 236; 1, p. 173.

[4] Loofs, *ib.*, p. 775 f.

[5] "*Quæ (conscientia) sæpe ad desperationem, ad gladium et ad laqueum homines adigit.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 25, p. 330; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 23, p. 141 *sq.*

[6] P. 737, n.

but even in the Old Testament it had been said: "Much peace have they that love thy Law."[1] According to Luther the man who is seeking for salvation and has not yet laid hold on faith in the forgiveness of sins must let himself be "ground down ['*conteri*,' cp. '*contritio*'] by the Law" until he has learnt "to live in a naked trust in God's Mercy."[2] The man, however, who by faith has assured himself of salvation looks at the Law and its transgressions, viz. sin, in quite a different light.

"He lives in a different world," says Luther, "where he must know nothing either of sin or of merit; if however he feels his sin, he is to look at it as clinging, not to his own person, but to the person (Christ) on whom God has cast it, i.e. he must regard it, not as it is in itself and appears to his conscience, but rather in Christ by Whom it has been atoned for and vanquished. Thus he has a heart cleansed from all sin by the faith which affirms that sin has been conquered and overthrown by Christ. . . . Hence it is sacrilege to look at the sin in your heart, for it is the devil who puts it there, not God. You must say, my sins are not mine; they are not in me at all; they are the sins of another; they are Christ's and are none of my business."[3] Elsewhere he describes similarly the firm consolation of the righteous with regard to the Law and its accusations of sin: "This is the supreme comfort of the righteous, to vest and clothe Christ with my sins and yours and those of the whole world, and then to look upon Him as the bearer of all our sins. The man who thus regards Him will soon come to scorn the fanatical notions of the sophists concerning justification by works. They rave of a faith that works by love ('*fides formata caritate*'), and assert that thereby sins are taken away and men justified. But this simply means to undress Christ, to strip Him of sin, to make Him innocent, to burden and load ourselves with our own sins and to see them, not in Christ, but in ourselves, which is the same thing as to put away Christ and say He is superfluous."[4]

The confidence with which Luther says such things concerning the transgression of the Divine Law by the righteous is quite startling; nor does he do so in mere occasional outbursts, but his frequent statements to this effect seem measured and dispassionate, nor were they intended simply for the learned but even for common folk. It was for the latter, for instance, that in his "Sermon von dem Sacrament der Puss" he said briefly: "To him who believes, everything is profitable and nothing harmful, but, to him who believes not, everything is harmful and nothing profitable."[5]

"Whosoever does not believe," i.e. has failed to lay hold of

[1] Mt. xi. 30; Ps. cxviii. 165.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 357; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 392. Luther frequently uses the term "*conteri lege*."

[3] "*Dices enim: Peccata mea non sunt mea, quia non sunt in me, sed sunt aliena, Christi videlicet; non ergo me lædere poterunt.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 25, p. 330; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 23, p. 141.

[4] "Comm. on Gal.," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 436; Irmischer, 2, p. 17.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 723; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 48.

the certainty of salvation, deserves to feel the relentless severity of the Law; let him learn that the "right understanding and use of the Law" is this, "that it does no more than prove" that all "who, without faith, follow its behests are slaves, stuck [in the Law] against their will and without any certainty of grace." "They must confess that by the Law they are unable to make the slightest progress."

"Even should you worry yourself to death with works, still your heart cannot thereby raise itself to such a faith as the Law calls for."[1]

Thus, by the Law alone, and without the help of Luther's "faith," we become sheer "martyrs of the devil."

It is this road, according to him, that the Papists tread and that he himself, so he assures us, had followed when a monk. There he had been obliged to grind himself on the Law, i.e. had been forced to fight his way in despair until at last he discovered justification in faith.[2] One thing that is certain is his early antipathy—due to the laxity of his life as a religious and to his pseudo-mysticism—for the burdens and supposed deadening effect of the Law, an antipathy to which he gave striking expression at the Heidelberg Disputation.[3]

Luther remained all his life averse to the Law.[4] In 1542, i.e. subsequent to the Antinomian controversy, he even compared the Law to the gallows. He hastens, however, to remove any bad impression he may have made, by referring to the power of the Gospel: "The Law does not punish the just; the gallows are not put up for those who do not steal but for robbers."[5] The words occur in an answer to his friends' questions concerning the biblical objections advanced by the Catholics. They had adduced certain passages in which everlasting life is promised to those who keep the Law ("*factores legis*") and where "love of God with the whole heart" rather than faith alone is represented as the true

[1] *Ib.*, 10, 1, l. p. 338 f. = 7², p. 259 ff.

[2] See, however, below, vol. vi., xxxvii., 2.

[3] Vol. i., p. 317 f. and *passim*.

[4] Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 260.—Ammon ("Hdb. der chr. Sittenlehre," 1, 1823, p. 76) laments that Luther "regarded the moral law merely as a vision of terror," and that according to him "the essence of the Christian religion consisted, not in moral perfection, but in faith." De Wette, "Christl. Sittenlehre," 2, 2, 1821, p. 280 f., thinks that an ethical system might have been erected on the antithesis set up by Luther between the Law and the Gospel and on his theories of Christian freedom, "but that Luther was not equal to doing so. He was too much taken up with his fight against the Catholic holiness-by-works to devote all the attention he should to the moral side of the question and not enough of a scholar even to dream of any connection between faith and morality being feasible."

[5] Mathesius, *ib.* The Note in question is by Caspar Heydenreich.

source of righteousness and salvation. Luther solves the questions to his own content. Those who keep the Law, he admits, "are certainly just, but not by any means owing to their fulfilment of the Law, for they were already just beforehand by virtue of the Gospel; for the man who acts as related in the Bible passages quoted stands in no need of the Law. . . . Sin does not reign over the just, and, to the end, it will not sully them. . . . The Law is named merely for those who sin, for Paul thus defines the Law: 'The Law is the knowledge of sin' (Rom. iii. 20)."—In reality what St. Paul says is that "*By the Law* is the knowledge of sin," and he only means that the Old-Testament ordinances of which he is speaking, led, according to God's plan, to a sense of utter helplessness and therefore to a yearning for the Saviour. Luther's very different idea, viz. that the Law was meant for the sinner and served as a gallows, is stated by W. Walther the Luther researcher, in the following milder though perfectly accurate form: "In so far as the Christian is not yet a believer he lacks true morality. Even in his case therefore the Law is not yet abrogated."[1]

"A distinction must be made," so Luther declares, "between the Law for the sinner and the Law for the non-sinner. The Law is not given to the righteous, i.e. it is not against them."[2]

The olden Church had stated her conception of the Law and the Gospel both simply and logically. In her case there was no assumption of any assurance of salvation by faith alone to disturb the relations between the Law and the Gospel; one was the complement of the other; though, agreeably to the Gospel, she proclaimed the doctrine of love in its highest perfection, yet at the same time, like St. Peter, she insisted in the name of the "Law," that, in the fear of sin and "by dint of good works" we must make sure our calling and election (2 Peter i. 10). She never ceased calling attention to the divinely appointed connection between the heavenly reward and our fidelity to the Law, vouched for both in the Old Testament ("For thou wilt render to every man according to his works," Ps. lxi. 13) and also in the New ("The Son of Man will render to every man according to his works," Mt. xvi. 27, and elsewhere, "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the proper things of the body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil," 2 Cor. v. 10).

[1] "Christl. Sittlichkeit nach Luther," 1909, p. 91 f.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 261.

3. Encounter with the Antinomianism of Agricola

Just as the Anabaptist and fanatic movement had originally been fostered by Luther's doctrines, so Antinomianism sprang from the seed he had scattered.

Johann Agricola, the chief spokesman of the Antinomians, merely carried certain theses of Luther's to their logical conclusion, doing so openly and regardless of the consequences. He went much further than his master, who often had at least the prudence here and elsewhere to turn back half-way, a want of logic which Luther had to thank for his escape from many dangers in both doctrine and practice. In the same way as Luther, with the utmost tenacity and vigour, had withstood the Anabaptists and fanatics when they strove to put in full practice his own principles, so also he proclaimed war on the Antinomians' enlargement and application of his ideas on the Law and Gospel which appeared to him fraught with the greatest danger. That the contentions of the Antinomians were largely his own, formulated anew, must be fairly evident to all.[1]

Johann Agricola, the fickle and rebellious Wittenberg professor, seized on Luther's denunciations of the Law, more particularly subsequent to the spring of 1537, and built them up into a fantastic Antinomian system, at the same time rounding on Luther, and even more on the cautious and reticent Melanchthon, for refusing to proceed along the road on which they had ventured. In support of his views he appealed to such sayings of Luther's, as, the Law "was not made for the just," and, was "a gallows only meant for thieves."

He showed that, whereas Luther had formerly refused to recognise any repentance due to fear of the menaces of the Law, he had come to hold up the terrors of the Law before the eyes of sinners. As a matter of fact Luther did, at a later date, teach that justifying faith was preceded by a contrition produced by the Law; such repentance due to fear was excited by God Almighty in the man deprived of moral freedom, as in a "*materia passiva.*"—The following

[1] Cp. the passages cited above, p. 9 ff., and vols. iii. and iv. *passim.*

theses were issued as Agricola's: "1. The Law [the Decalogue] does not deserve to be called the Word of God. 2. Even should you be a prostitute, a cuckold, an adulterer or any other kind of sinner, yet, so long as you believe, you are on the road to salvation. 3. If you are sunk in the depths of sin, if only you believe, you are really in a state of grace. 4. The Decalogue belongs to the petty sessions, not to the pulpit. 11. The words of Peter: 'That by good works you may make sure your calling and election' [2 Peter i. 10] are all rubbish. 12. So soon as you begin to fancy that Christianity requires this or that, or that people should be good, honest, moral, holy and chaste, you have already rent asunder the Gospel [Luke, ch. vi.]."[1]

In his counter theses Luther indignantly rejected such opinions: "the deduction is not valid," he says, for instance, "when people make out, that what is not necessary for justification, either at the outset, later, or at the end, should not to be taught" (as obligatory), e.g. the keeping of the Law, personal co-operation and good works. "Even though the Law be useless to justification, still it does not follow that it is to be made away with, or not to be taught."[2]

Luther was the more indignant at the open opposition manifest in his own neighbourhood and at the yet worse things that were being whispered, because he feared, that, owing to the friendly understanding between Agricola, Jacob Schenk and others, the new movement might extend abroad. The doctrine, in its excesses, seemed to him as compromising as the teaching of Carlstadt and the doings of the fanatics in former days. In reality it did embody a

[1] It was Luther himself who published the Antinomian theses in two series on Dec. 1, 1537. Cp. "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 420 *sqq*. The most offensive of these theses Luther described as the outcome of Agricola's teaching and attributed them to one of the latter's pupils; Agricola, however, refused to admit that the propositions were his. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau (2, p. 458), who, after attempting to harmonise Luther's earlier and later teaching on the Law, proceeds: "He paid no heed to the fact that Agricola was seeking to root sin out of the heart of the believer, though in a way all his own, and which Luther distrusted, nor did he make any distinction between what Agricola merely hinted at and what others carried to extremes: in the one he already saw the other embodied. All this was characteristic enough of Luther's way of conducting controversy."

[2] "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 434 (Thes. 17), 428 (Thes. 10).

fanatical doctrine and an extremely dangerous pseudo-theology; in Antinomianism the pseudo-mystical ideas concerning freedom and inner experience which from the very beginning had brought Luther into conflict with the "Law," culminated in a sort of up-to-date gnosticism.

We now find Luther, in the teeth of his previous statements, declaring that "Whoever makes away with the Law, makes away with the Gospel."[1] He says: "Agricola perverts our doctrine, which is the solace of consciences, and seeks by its means to set up the freedom of the flesh";[2] the grace preached by Agricola was really nothing more than immoral licence.[3]

The better to counter the new movement Luther at once proceeded to modify his teaching concerning the Law. In this wise Antinomianism exercised on him a restraining influence, and was to some extent of service to his doctrine and undertaking, warning him, as the fanatic movement had done previously, of certain rocks to be avoided.

Luther now came to praise Melanchthon's view of the Law, which hitherto had not appealed to him, and declared in his Table-Talk: If the Law is done away with in the Church, that will spell the end of all knowledge of sin.[4]

This last utterance, dating from March, 1537, is the first to forebode the controversy about to commence, which was to cause Luther so much anxiety but which at the same time affords us so good an insight into his ethics and, no less, into his character. Even more noteworthy are the two sermons in which he expounds his standpoint as against that of Agricola, whom, however, he does not name.[5]

The first step taken by Luther at the University against the Antinomian movement was the Disputation of Dec. 18, 1537. For this he drew up a list of weighty theses. When the Disputation was announced everyone was aware that it was aimed at a member of the Wittenberg Professorial staff, at one, moreover, whom Luther himself, as dean, had authorised to deliver lectures on theology at Wittenberg. When Agricola failed even to put in an appearance at the

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 352. [2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*, p. 357.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 403.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 153, Sermon of July 1, 5th Sunday after Trinity, and *ib.*, 14^2, p. 178, Sermon of Sep. 30, 18th Sunday after Trinity. Cp. Buchwald, "Ungedruckte Predigten Luthers," 3, p. 108 ff. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 457.

Disputation, as though it in no way concerned him, and also continued to "agitate secretly" against the Wittenberg doctrine, Luther, in a letter addressed to Agricola on Jan. 6, 1538, withdrew from him his faculty to teach, and even demanded that he should forswear theology altogether ("*a theologia in totum abstinere*"); if he now wished to deliver lectures he would have to ask permission "of the University" (where Luther's influence was paramount).[1] This was a severe blow for Agricola and his family. His wife called on Luther, dropped a humble curtsey and assured him that in future her husband would do whatever he was told. This seems to have mollified Luther. Agricola himself also plucked up courage to go to him, only to be informed that he would have to appear at the second Disputation on the subject—for which Luther had drawn up a fresh set of theses—and there make a public recantation. Driven into a corner, Agricola agreed to these terms. At the second Disputation (Jan. 12, 1538) he did, as a matter of fact, give explanations deemed satisfactory by Luther, by whom he was rewarded with an assurance of confidence. He was, nevertheless, excluded from all academical office, and though the Elector of Saxony permitted him to act as preacher this sanction was not extended by Bugenhagen to any preaching at Wittenberg.[2] A third and fourth set of theses drawn up by Luther,[3] who could not do enough against the new heresy, date from the interval previous to the settlement, though no Disputation was held on them that the peace might not be broken.

Agricola nevertheless was staunch in his contention, that, in his earlier writings, Luther had expressed himself quite differently, and this was a fact which it was difficult to disprove.

On account of Agricola's renewal of activity, Luther, on Sep. 13, 1538, held another lengthy and severe Disputation against him and his supporters, the "hotheads and avowed hypocrites." For this occasion he produced a fifth and last set of theses. He also insisted that his opponent should publicly eat his words. This time Luther admitted that

[1] "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 323.

[2] Cp. Drews, "Disputationen Luthers," pp. 382, 388, 394; G. Kawerau, "Joh. Agricola," 1881, p. 194.

[3] "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 430 *sq.*

some of his own previous statements had been injudicious, though he was disposed to excuse them. In the beginning they had been preaching to people whose consciences were troubled and who stood in need of a different kind of language than those whose consciences had first to be stirred up. Agricola, finding himself in danger of losing his daily bread, yielded, and even agreed to allow Luther himself to pen the draft of his retractation, hoping thus to get off more easily.

Instead of this, and in order, as he said, to "paint him as a cowardly, proud and godless man," Luther wrote a tract ("Against the Antinomians") addressed to the preacher Caspar Güttel, which might take the place of the retractation agreed upon.[1] It was exceedingly rude to Agricola. It represented him as a man of "unusual arrogance and presumption," "who presumed to have a mind of his own, but one that was really intent on self-glorification"; he was a standing proof that in the world "the devil liveth and reigneth"; by his means the devil was set on raising another storm against Luther's Evangel, like those others raised by Carlstadt, Münzer, the Anabaptists and so forth.[2] In spite of all this the writing, according to a statement made by its author to Melanchthon, was all too mild ("*tam levis fui*"), particularly now that Agricola's great "obstinacy" was becoming so patent.[3]

Luther even spoke of the excommunication which should be launched against so contumacious a man. As a penalty he caused him to be excluded from among the candidates for the office of Dean, and when Agricola complained to the Rector and to Bugenhagen of Luther's "tyranny" both refused to listen to him.[4]

In the meantime Agricola expressed his complete submission in a printed statement, which, however, was probably not meant seriously, and thereupon, on Feb. 7, 1539, was nominated by the Elector a member of the Consistory. He at once profited by this mark of favour to present at Court a written complaint against Luther,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 1 ff. (publ. early in 1539). Also "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 147 ff.

[2] "Briefe," *ib.*, p. 154.

[3] To Melanchthon, Feb. 2, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 84.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 35 (Table-Talk). Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 462 f.

referring particularly to the scurrilous circular letter sent to Caspar Güttel. He protested that, for wellnigh three years, he had submitted to being trodden under foot by Luther, and had slunk along at his heels like a wretched cur, though there had been no end to the insult and abuse heaped upon him. What Luther reproached him with he had never taught. The latter had accused him of many things which he "neither would, could nor might admit."[1]

Luther in his turn, in a writing, appealed to the Elector and his supreme tribunal. In vigorous language he explained to the Court, utterly incapable though it was of deciding on so delicate a question, why he had been obliged to withstand the false opinions of his opponent which the Bible condemned. Agricola had dared to call Luther's doctrine unclean, "a doctrine on behalf of which our beloved Prince and Lord wagered and imperilled land and subjects, life and limb, not to speak of his soul and ours." In other words, to differ from Luther was high treason against the sovereign who agreed with him. He sneers at Agricola in a tone which shows how great licence he allowed himself in his dealings with the Elector: Agricola had drawn up a Catechism, best nicknamed a "Cackism"; Master Grickel was ridden by an angry imp, etc. So far was he from offering any excuse for his virulence against Agricola that he even expressed his regret for having been "so friendly and gentle."[2]

To the same authority, as though to it belonged judgment in ecclesiastical matters, Melanchthon, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Amsdorf sent a joint memorandum in which they recommended a truce, "somewhat timidly pointing out to the Elector, that Luther was hardly a man who could be expected to retract."[3]

The Court Councillors now took the whole matter into their hands and it was settled to lodge a formal suit against Agricola. The latter, however, accepted a call from Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, to act as Court preacher, and, in spite of having entered into recognisances not to quit the

[1] (In March, 1540) see C. E. Förstemann, "N. Urkundenbuch zur Gesch. der Kirchenreformation," 1, 1842, reprinted, p. 317 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 321 ff.; also in "Werke," ed. Walch, 20, p. 2061 ff., and "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 256 ff.

[3] Förstemann, *ib.*, p. 325. The quotation is from G. Kawerau, "Joh. Agricola," "RE. f. prot. Theol."

town, he made haste to get himself gone to his new post in Berlin (Aug., 1540). On a summons from Wittenberg, and seeing that, unless he made peace with Luther, he could do nothing at Berlin, he consented to issue a circular letter to the preachers, magistrates and congregation of Eisleben[1] "which might have satisfied even Luther's exorbitant demands."[2] He explained that he had in the meantime thought better of the points under discussion, and even promised "to believe and teach as the Church at Wittenberg believes and teaches."

In 1545, when he came to Wittenberg with his wife and daughter, Luther, who still bore him a grudge, whilst allowing them to pay him a visit, refused to see Agricola himself. On another occasion it was only thanks to the friendly intervention of Catherine Bora that Luther consented to glance at a kindly letter from him, but of any reconciliation he would not hear. Regarding this last incident we have a note of Agricola's own: "*Domina Ketha, rectrix cœli et terræ, Iuno coniunx et soror Iovis*, who rules her husband as she wills, has for once in a way spoken a good word on my behalf. Jonas likewise did the same."[3]

Luther's hostility continued to the day of his death. He found justification for his harshness and for his refusal to be reconciled in the evident inconstancy and turbulence of his opponent. For a while, too, he was disposed to credit the news that Antinomianism was on the increase in Saxony, Thuringia and elsewhere.

Not only was Agricola's fickleness not calculated to inspire confidence, but his life also left much to be desired from the moral standpoint. Though Luther was perhaps unaware of it, we learn from Agricola's own private Notes, that the "vices in which the young take delight" had assailed him in riper years even more strongly than in his youth. Seckendorff also implies that he did not lead a "regular life."[4]

In 1547 Agricola, together with Julius Pflug, Bishop of Naumburg, and Helding, auxiliary of Mayence, drew up the Augsburg Interim. As General Superintendent of the

[1] Förstemann, *ib.*, p. 349. [2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 464.
[3] E. Kroker, "Katharina von Bora," 1906, p. 280, from Agricola's Notes, pub. by E. Thiele.
[4] Cp. Kawerau in the Article referred to above, p. 20, n. 3.

Brandenburg district and at the invitation of his Elector he assisted in the following year at the religious Conferences of the Saxon theologians. He died at Berlin, Sep. 22, 1566, of a disease resulting from the plague.

Of the feeling called forth in circles friendly to Luther by Agricola's part in the Interim we have proof in the preface which introduces in the edition of 1549 Luther's letter of 1539 to the Saxon Court. Here we read: If the Eisleben fellow (Agricola) "was ever a dissolute sharper, who secretly promoted false doctrine and made use of the favour and applause of the pious as a cloak for his knavery," much more has this now become apparent by his outcry concerning the Interim and the alleged good it does. The editors recall the fact, that "Our worthy father in God, Dr. Martin Luther of happy memory, shortly before his end, in the presence of Dr. Pommer, Philip, Creutziger, Major, Jonas and D. Paulus Benedictus" spoke as follows: "Eisleben (Agricola) is not merely ridden by the devil but the devil himself lodges in him." In proof of the latter statement they add, that trustworthy persons, who had good grounds for their opinion, had declared, that "it was the simple truth that devils had visibly appeared in Eisleben's house and study, and at times had made a great disturbance and clatter; whence it is clear that he is the devil's own in body and soul." "The truth," they conclude, "is clear and manifest. God gives us warnings enough in the writings of pious and learned persons and also by signs in the sky and in the waters. Let whoever wills be admonished and warned. For to each one it is a matter of life eternal; to which may God assist us through Christ our Lord, Amen."[1]

A writing of Melanchthon's, dating from the last months of his life and brought to light only in 1894, gives further information concerning a later phase of the Antinomian controversy as fought out between Agricola and Melanchthon.[2]

Melanchthon, for all his supposed kindliness, here empties the vials of his wrath on Johann Agricola because the latter had vehemently assailed his thesis "*Bona opera sunt necessaria.*" As a matter of fact, so he writes, he bothered himself as little about Agricola's "preaching, slander, abuse, insistence and threats" as about the "cackle of some crazy gander." But Christian people were becoming scandalised at "this grand preacher of blasphemy" and were beginning to suspect his own (Melanchthon's) faith. Hence he would have them know that Agricola's component parts were an "asinine righteousness, a superstitious arrogance and an Epicurean belly-service." To his thesis he could not but adhere to his last breath, even were he to be torn to pieces with red-hot pincers. He had refrained from adding the words "*ad salutem*" after "*necessaria*" lest the

[1] "Luthers Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 256 ff.

[2] Melanchthon to Willibald Ransberck (Ramsbeck), Jan. 26, 1560, publ. by Nic. Müller in "Zeitschr. für KG.," 14, 1894, p. 139.

unwary should think of some merit. The "*ad salutem*" was an addition of Agricola's, that "foolish man," who had thrust it on him by means of a "shameless and barefaced lie." He is anxious to win his spurs off the Lutherans. Yet donkeys of his ilk do understand nothing in the matter, and God will "punish these blasphemers and disturbers of the Churches. But in order that "a final end may at length be put to the evil doing, slander, abuse and cavilling it will," he says, "be necessary for God to send the Turk; nothing else will help in such a case." Melanchthon compares himself to Joseph, who was sold by his brethren. If Joseph had to endure this "in the first Church," what then "will be my fate in the extreme old age of this mad world ('*extrema mundi delira senecta*') when licence wanders abroad unrestrained to sully everything and when such unspeakably cruel hypocrites control our destinies? I can only pray to God that He will deign to come to the aid of His Church and graciously heal all the gaping wounds dealt her by her foes. Amen."

A certain reaction against the Antinomian tendency, is, as already explained, noticeable in Luther's latter years; at least he felt called upon to revise a little his former standpoint with regard to the Law, the motive of fear, indifference to sin and so forth, and to remove it from the danger of abuse. He was also at pains to contradict the view that his doctrine of faith involved an abrogation of the Law. "The fools do not know," he remarked, for instance, alluding to Jacob Schenk, "all that faith has to do."[1]

In his controversy with Agricola we can detect a tendency on his part "to revert to Melanchthon's doctrine concerning repentance."[2] He insisted far more strongly than before[3] on the necessity of preaching the Law in order to arouse contrition; he even went so far along Catholic lines as to assert, that "Penance is sorrow for sin with the resolve to lead a better life."[4] He also admitted, that, at the outset, he had said things which the Antinomians now urged against the Law, though he also strove to show that he had taken pains to qualify and safeguard what he had said. Nor indeed can Luther ever have expected that all the strong things he had once hurled against the Law and its demands would ever be used to build up a new moral theology.

And yet, even at the height of the Antinomian contro-

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 90. For other statements of Luther's see our vol. iii., p. 401.

[2] Loofs, *ib.*, p. 858.

[3] On Luther's attitude towards penance see our vol. iii., pp. 184 ff,. 196.

[4] "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 424.

versy, he stood firmly by his thesis regarding the Law, fear and contrition, viz. that "Whoever seeks to be led to repentance by the Law, will never attain to it, but, on the contrary, will only turn his back on it the more";[1] to this he was ever true.

"Luther," says Adolf Harnack, "could never doubt that only the Christian who has been vanquished by the Gospel is capable of true repentance, and that the Law can work no real repentance."[2] The fact however remains, that, at least if we take his words as they stand, we do find in Luther a doctrine of repentance which does not claim faith in the forgiveness of sins so exclusively as its source.[3] The fact is that his statements do not tally.[4] Other Protestant theologians will have it that no change took place in Luther's views on penance,[5] or at least that the attempts so far made to solve the problem are not satisfactory.[6] Stress should, however, be laid on the fact, that, during his contest with Antinomianism Luther insisted that it was necessary "to drive men to penance even by the terrors of the Law,"[7] and that, alluding to his earlier statements, he admits having had much to learn: "I have been made to experience the words of St. Peter, 'Grow in the knowledge of the Lord.'"

Of the converted, i.e. of those justified by the certainty of salvation, he says in 1538 in his Disputations against Agricola: The pious Christian as such "is dead to the Law and serves it not, but lies in the bosom of grace, secure in the righteousness imputed to him by God. . . . But, so far as he is still in the flesh, he serves the law of sin, repulsive as it may sound that a saint should be subject to the law of sin."[8] If Luther finds in the saint or devout man such a double life, a free man side by side with a slave, holiness side by side with sin, this is on account of the concupiscence, or as Luther says elsewhere, original sin, which still persists, and the results of which he regarded as really sinful in God's sight.

Elsewhere in the same Disputations he speaks of the Law as contemptuously as ever: "The Law can work in the soul nothing but wanhope; it fills us with shame; to lead us to seek God is not in the nature and might of the Law; this is the doing of

[1] See above, p. 11, n. 2. [2] "DG.," 3[4], p. 842.

[3] Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 860, n. 2 and 4; 790, n. 7, and Harnack, *ib.*

[4] Harnack (*loc. cit.*) points out that Luther's statements on the subject do not agree when examined in detail.

[5] E.g., Lipsius, "Luthers Lehre von der Busse," 1892.

[6] E.g., Galley, "Die Busslehre Luthers und ihre Darstellung in neuester Zeit," 1900.

[7] To the latter passage ("Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 7) E. F. Fischer draws attention ("Luthers Sermo de pœnitentia von 1518," 1906, p. 36). Galley (*loc. cit.*, p. 20) had also referred to the same as being a further development of Luther's doctrine on penance.—On Luther's shifting attitude in regard to the motive of fear see our vol. iv., p. 455 f.

[8] "Disputationes," ed. Drews, p. 452.

"another fellow," viz. of the Gospel with its preaching of forgiveness of sins in Christ.[1] It is true he adds in a kindlier vein: "The Law ought not so greatly to terrify those who are justified ('*nec deberet ita terrere iustificatos*') for it is already much chastened by our justification in Christ. But the devil comes and makes the Law harsh and repellent to those who are justified. Thus, through the devil's fault, many are filled with fear who have no reason to fear. But [and now follows the repudiation of the extreme theories of the Antinomians], the Law is not on that account abolished in the Church, or its preaching suppressed; for even the pious have some remnant of sin abiding in their flesh, which must be purified by the Law. . . . To them, however, the Law must be preached under a milder form; they should be admonished in this wise: You are now washed clean in the Blood of Christ. Yield therefore your bodies to serve justice and lay aside the lusts of the flesh that you may not become like to the world. Be zealous for the righteousness of good works." There too he also teaches how the "Law" must be brought home to hardened sinners. In their case no "mitigation" is allowable. On the contrary, they are to be told: You will be damned, God hates you, you are full of unrighteousness, your lot is that of Cain, etc. For, "before Justification, the Law rules, and terrifies all who come in contact with it, it convicts and condemns."[2]

Among the most instructive utterances touching the Antinomians is the following one on sin, more particularly on breach of wedlock, which may be given here as amplifying Luther's statements on the subject recorded in our vol. iii. (pp. 245, 256 f., etc.): The Antinomians taught, so he says, that, if a man had broken wedlock, he had only to believe ("*tantum ut crederet*") and he would find a Gracious God. But surely that was no Church where so horrible a doctrine ("*horribilis vox*") was heard. On the contrary what was to be taught was, that, in the first place, there were adulterers and other sinners who acknowledged their sin, made good resolutions against it and possessed real faith, such as these found mercy with God. In the second place, however, there were others who neither repented of their sin nor wished to forsake it; such men had no faith, and a preacher who should discourse to them concerning faith (i.e. fiducial faith) would merely be seducing and deceiving them.

4. The Certainty of Salvation and its relation to Morality

How did Luther square his system of morality with his principal doctrine of Faith and Justification, and where did he find any ground for the performance of good works?

In the main he made everything to proceed from and rest upon a firm, personal certainty of salvation. The artificial

[1] *Ib.*, p. 402. [2] *Ib.*, pp. 402–404.

system thus built up, so far as it is entitled to be called a system at all, requires only to be set forth in order to be appreciated as it deserves. It will be our duty to consider Luther's various statements, and finally his own summary, made late in life, of the conclusions he had reached.

Certainty of Salvation as the cause and aim of True Morality. The Psychological Explanation

Quite early Luther had declared: "The '*fides specialis*,' or assurance of salvation, of itself impels man to true morality." For, "faith brings along with it love, peace, joy and hope. . . . In this faith all works are equal and one as good as the other, and any difference between works disappears, whether they be great or small, short or long, few or many; for works are not pleasing [to God] in themselves but on account of faith. . . . A Christian who lives in this faith has no need to be taught good works, but, whatever occurs to him, that he does, and everything is well done." Such are his words in his "Sermon von den guten Wercken" to Duke Johann of Saxony in 1520.[1]

He frequently repeats, that "Faith brings love along with it," which impels us to do good.

He enlarges on this in the festival sermons in his Church-Postils, and says: When I am made aware by faith, that, through the Son of God Who died for me, I am able to "resist and flaunt sin, death, devil, hell and every ill, then I cannot but love Him in return and be well disposed towards Him, keeping His commandments and doing lovingly and gladly everything He asks"; the heart will then show itself full "of gratitude and love. But, seeing that God stands in no need of our works and that He has not commanded us to do anything else for Him but to praise and thank Him, therefore such a man must proceed to devote himself entirely to his neighbour, to serve, help and counsel him freely and without reward."[2]

All this, as Luther says in his "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen," must be performed "by a free, willing, cheerful and unrequited serving of our neighbour";[3] it

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 206 f.; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 127.
[2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 40.
[3] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 36; Erl. ed., 27, p. 196.

must be done "cheerfully and gladly for Christ's sake Who has done so much for us."[1] "That same Law which once was hateful to free-will," he says in his Commentary on Galatians, "now [i.e. after we have received the faith and assurance of salvation] becomes quite pleasant since love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. . . . We now are lovers of the Law."[2] From the wondrous well-spring of the imputed merits of Christ there comes first and foremost prayer; if only we cling "trustfully to the promise of grace," then "the heart will unceasingly beat and pulsate to such prayers as the following: O, beloved Father, may Thy Name be hallowed, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done."[3] But all is not prayer and holy desire; even when the "soul has been cleansed by faith," the Christian still must struggle against sin and against the body "in order to deaden its wantonness."[4] The Christian will set himself to acquire chastity; "in this work a good, strong faith is of great help, more so here than anything else." And why? Because whoever is assured of salvation in Christ and "enjoys the grace of God, also delights in spiritual purity. . . . Under such a faith the Spirit without doubt will tell him how to avoid evil thoughts and everything opposed to chastity. For as faith in the Divine mercy persists and works all good, so also it never ceases to inform us of all that is pleasing or displeasing to God."[5]

Whence does our will derive the ability and strength to wage this struggle to the end? Only from the assurance of salvation, from its unshaken awareness that it has indeed a Gracious God. For this certainty of faith sets one free, first of all from those anxieties with regard to one's salvation with which the righteous-by-works are plagued and thus allows one to devote time and strength to doing what is good; secondly this faith in one's salvation teaches one how to overcome the difficulties that stand in one's way.[6]

There was, however, an objection raised against Luther

[1] *Ib.*, p. 30=189.
[2] "Comm. in ep. ad. Gal.," 3, p. 365 (Irmischer).
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 49, p. 114 f., Exposition of John xiv.–xvi.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 30 f.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 189 f.
[5] *Ib.*, 6, p. 269 f.=16², p. 212, "Sermon von den guten Wercken," 1520.
[6] Our account is from Walther (above, p. 14, n. 1), p. 75 ff. His faithful rendering of Luther's thought shows how actual grace is excluded.

by his contemporaries and which even presented itself to his own mind: Why should a lifelong struggle and the performance of good works be requisite for a salvation of which we are already certain? It was re-formulated even by Albert Ritschl, in whose work, "Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung," we find the words: "If one asks why God, Who makes salvation to depend on Justification by faith, prescribes good works at all, the arbitrary character of the assumption becomes quite evident."[1] In Luther's own writings we repeatedly hear the same stricture voiced: "If sin is forgiven me gratuitously by God's Mercy and is blotted out in baptism, then there is nothing for me to do." People say, "If faith is everything and suffices of itself to make us pious, why then are good works enjoined?"[2]

In order to render Luther's meaning adequately we must emphasise his leading answer to such objections. He is determined to insist on good works, because, as he says, they are of the utmost importance to the one thing on which everything else depends, viz. to faith and the assurance of salvation.[3]

In his "Sermon von den guten Wercken," which deserves to be taken as conclusive, he declares outright that all good works are ordained—for the sake of faith. "Such works and sufferings must be performed in faith and in firm trust in the Divine mercy, in order that, as already stated, all works may come under the first commandment and under faith, and that they may serve to exercise and strengthen faith, on account of which all the other commandments and works are demanded."[4] Hence morality is necessary, not primarily in order to please God, to obey Him and thus to work out our salvation, but in order to strengthen our "*fides specialis*" in our own salvation, which then does all the needful.[5] It is necessary, as Luther says elsewhere, in order to provide a man with a reassuring token of the reality of his "*fides specialis*"; he may for instance be tempted to doubt whether he possesses this saving gift of God, though the very doubt already spells its destruction; hence let him look at his works; if they are good, they will tell him at the dread hour

[1] 3^4, p. 460.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 29 f.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 188. "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen." Cp. *ib.*, Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 257.

[3] Walther, *ib.*, p. 99.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 249; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 184.

[5] Cp. "Briefe," ed. De Wette, where the idea that faith "then does all the needful," and that works are a natural product of faith is summed up thus: "*Opera propter fidem fiunt.*"

of death: Yes, you have the "faith."[1] Strangely enough he also takes the Bible passages which deal with works performed under grace as referring to faith, e.g. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments" (Mt. xix. 17) and, "By good works make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter i. 10). The latter exhortation of St. Peter signifies according to Luther's exegesis: "Take care to strengthen your faith," from the works "you may see whether you have the faith."[2] According to St. Peter you are to seek in works merely "a sign and token that the faith is there"; his meaning is not that you "are to do good works in order that you may secure your election." "We are not to fancy that thereby we can become pious."[3]

This thought is supplemented by another frequent exhortation of Luther's which concerns the consciousness of sin persisting even after "justification." The sense of sin has, according to him, no other purpose than to strengthen us in our trustful clinging to Christ, for as no one's faith is perfect we are ever called upon to fortify it, in which we are aided by this anxiety concerning sin: "Though we still feel sin within us this is merely to drive us to faith and make our faith stronger, so that despite our feeling we may accept the Word and cling with all our heart and conscience to Christ alone," in other words, to follow Luther's own example amidst the pangs of conscience that had plunged him into "death and hell."[4] "Thus does faith, against all feeling and reason, lead us quietly through sin, through death and through hell." "The more faith waxes, the more the feeling diminishes, and vice versa. Sins still persist within us, e.g. pride, avarice, anger and so on and so forth, but only in order to move us to faith." He refrains from adducing from Holy Scripture any proof in support of so strange a theory, but proceeds to sing a pæan on faith "in order that faith may increase from day to day until man at length becomes a Christian through and through, keeps the real Sabbath, and creeps, skin, hair and all, into Christ."[5] The Christian, by accustoming himself to trust in the pardoning grace of Christ and by fortifying himself in this faith, becomes at length "one paste with Christ."[6]

Hence the "*fides specialis*," as just explained, seems to be the chief ethical aim of life.[7] This is why it is so necessary to strengthen it by works, and so essential to beat down all anxieties of conscience.

[1] Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 386; Erl. ed., 51, p. 479, in 1523, on 1 Peter iv. 19. Cp. also Erl. ed., 18^2, pp. 330, 333 f., in 1532, on 1 John iv. 17.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 273. [3] *Ib.*, 13^2, p. 97.

[4] Cp. our vol. iv., p. 442.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 219 f. [6] *Ib.*, 14^2, p. 257.

[7] Cp. Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 737. Hence Luther also says: "*Dum bonus aut malus quisquam efficitur, non hoc ab operibus, sed a fide vel incredulitate oritur.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 62; "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 239.

Here Luther is speaking from his own inward experience. He says: "Thus must the conscience be lulled to rest and made content, thus must all the waves and billows subside. . . . Our sins towered mountain-high about us and would fain have made us despair, but in the end they are calmed, and settle down, and soon are seen no longer."[1] It was only very late in his life that Luther reached a state of comparative calm, a calm moreover best to be compared with the utter weariness of a man worn out by fatigue.[2]

Luther's Last Sermons at Eisleben on the Great Questions of Morality

In the four sermons he preached at Eisleben—the last he ever delivered—Luther gives utterance to certain leading thoughts quite peculiar to himself regarding morality and the "*fides specialis*." These utterances, under the circumstances to be regarded as the ripest fruit of his reflection, must be taken in conjunction with other statements made by him in his old age. They illustrate even more clearly than what has gone before the cardinal point of his teaching now under discussion, which, even more than any other, has had the bad luck to be so often wrongly presented by combatants on either side.

Luther's four sermons at Eisleben, which practically constitute his Last Will and Testament of his views on faith and good works, were delivered before a great concourse of people. A note on one delivered on Feb. 2, 1546, tells us: "So great was the number of listeners collected from the surrounding neighbourhood, market-places and villages, that even Paul himself were he to come preaching could hardly expect a larger audience."[3] For the reports of his sermons we are indebted to the pen of his pupil and companion on his journey, Johann Aurifaber.[4] From their contents we can see how much Luther was accustomed to adapt himself to his hearers and to the conditions prevailing in the district where he preached. The great indulgence

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 220. [2] See below, ch. xxxii., 6.
[3] Printed, in "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 524.
[4] The first revised by Cruciger. Aurifaber published his notes four months after the sermons, which, as the Preface points out, "might well be taken as a standing witness to his [Luther's] doctrine." "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 501.

then extended to the Jews in that territory of the Counts of Mansfeld; the religious scepticism shared or favoured by certain people at the Court; and, in particular, the moral licence—which, taking its cue from Luther's teaching, argued: "Well and good, I will sin lustily since sin has been taken away and can no longer damn me," as he himself relates in the third sermon,[1]—all this lends colour to the background of these addresses delivered at Eisleben. In particular the third sermon, on the parable of the cockle (Mt. xiii. 24–30), is well worth notice. It speaks of the weeds which infest the Church and of those which spring up in ourselves; in the latter connection Luther expatiates on the leading principles of his ethics, on faith, sin and good works, and concludes by telling the Christian how he must live and "grow in faith and the spirit."[2] One cannot but acknowledge the force with which the preacher, who was even then suffering acutely, speaks on behalf of good works and the struggle against sin. What he says is, however, tainted by his own peculiar views.

"God forgives sin in that He does not impute it. . . . But from this it does not follow that you are without sin, although it is already forgiven; for in yourself you feel no hearty desire to obey God, to go to the sacrament or to hear God's Word. Do you perhaps imagine that this is no sin, or mere child's play?" Hence, he concludes, we must pray daily "for forgiveness and never cease to fight against ourselves and not give the rein to our sinful inclinations and lusts, nor obey them contrary to the dictates of conscience, but rather weaken and deaden sin ever more and more; for sin must not merely be forgiven but verily swept away and destroyed."[3]

He exhorts his hearers to struggle against sin, whether original or actual sin, and does so in words which place the "*fides specialis*" in the first place and impose the obligation of a painful and laborious warfare which contrasts strongly with the spontaneous joy of the just in doing what is good, elsewhere taken for granted by Luther.

"Our doctrine as to how we are to deal with our own uncleanness and sin is briefly this: Believe in Jesus Christ and your sins are forgiven; then avoid and withstand sin, wage a hand-to-hand fight with it, do not allow it its way, do not hate or cheat your neighbour," etc.[4]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., *ib.*, p. 551.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 552.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 551.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 554.

Such admonitions strenuously to strive against sin involuntarily recall some very different assurances of his, viz. that the man who has once laid hold on righteousness by faith, at once and of his own accord does what is good: "Hence from faith there springs love and joy in God and a free and willing service of our neighbour out of simple love."

Elsewhere too he says, "Good works are performed by faith and out of our heartfelt joy that we have through Christ obtained the remission of our sins. . . . Interiorly everything is sweet and delicious, and hence we do and suffer all things gladly."[1] And again, just as we eat and drink naturally, so also to do what is good comes naturally to the believer; the word is fulfilled: Only believe and you will do all things of your own accord;[2] as a good tree must bring forth good fruit and cannot do otherwise, so, where there is faith, good works there must also be.[3] He speaks of this as a "*necessitas immutabilitatis*" and as a "*necessitas gratuita*," no less necessary than that the sun must shine. In 1536 he even declared in an instruction to Melanchthon that it was not right to say that a believer *should* do good works, because he can't help performing them; who thinks of ordering "the sun to shine, a good tree to bring forth good fruit, or three and seven to make ten?"[4]

Of this curious idealism, first noticed in his "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen," we find traces in Luther till the very end of his life.[5] In later life, however, he either altered it a little or was less prone to insist on it in and out of season. This was due to his unfortunate experiences to the contrary; as a matter of fact faith failed to produce the effects expected, and only in rare instances and at its very best was it as fruitful as Luther wished. The truth is he had overrated it, obviously misled by his enthusiasm for his alleged discovery of the power of faith for justification.

He was also fond of saying—and of this assurance we find an echo in his last sermon—that a true and lively faith should govern even our feeling, and as we are so little conscious of such a feeling and impulse to what is good, it follows that we but seldom have this faith, i.e. this lively certainty of salvation.

When a Christian is lazy, starts thinking he possesses everything and refuses to grow and increase, then "neither has he earnestness nor a true faith." Even the just are conscious of sin

[1] "Comm. on Gal.," 1, p. 196 (Irmischer).
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 559; Erl. ed., 12^2, p. 175. "Comm. on Gal." (Irmischer), 1, p. 196.
[3] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 17^2, p. 94; 49, p. 348. [4] *Ib.*, 58, pp. 343, 347.
[5] See above, p. 26 f., and vol. ii., p. 27 ff.

(i.e. original sin), but they resist it ; but where there is a distaste for the beloved Word of God there can be "no real faith." Luther, to the detriment of his ethics, was disposed to relegate faith too much to the region of feeling and personal experience ; this, however, he could scarcely avoid since his was a "*fides specialis*" in one's own personal salvation. True religion, in his opinion, is ever to rejoice and be glad by reason of the forgiveness of sins and cheerfully to run the way of God's service ; this idea is prominent in his third sermon at Eisleben. The right faith "is toothsome and lively ; it consoles and gladdens."[1] "It bores its way into the heart and brings comfort and cheer" ; "we feel glad and ready for anything."[2]

But because the actual facts and his experience failed to tally with his views, Luther, as already explained, had recourse to a convenient expedient ; towards the close of his life we frequently hear him speaking as follows : Unfortunately we have not yet got this faith, for "we do not possess in our hearts, and cannot acquire, that joy which we would gladly feel" ; thus we become conscious how the "old Adam, sin and our sinful nature, still persist within us ; this it is that forces you and me to fail in our faith."[3] "Even great saints do not always feel that joy and might, and we others, owing to our unbelief, cannot attain to this exalted consolation and strength . . . and even though we would gladly believe, yet we cannot make our faith as strong as we ought."[4] He vouchsafes no answer to the objection : But why then set up aims that cannot be reached ; why make the starting-point consist in a "faith" of which man, owing to original sin, can only attain to a shadow, except perhaps in the rare instances of martyrs, or divinely endowed saints ?

Luther, when insisting so strongly that good works must follow "faith," as a moral incentive to such works also refers incidentally to our duty of gratitude and love in return for this faith bestowed on us.

Thus in the Eisleben sermons he invites the believer, the better to arouse himself to good works, to address God in this way : "Heavenly Father, there is no doubt that Thou hast given Thy Son for the forgiveness of my sins. Therefore will I thank God for this during my whole life, and praise and exalt Him, and no longer steal, practise usury or be miserly, proud or jealous. . . . If you rightly believe," he continues, "that God has sent you His Son, you will, like a fruitful tree, bring forth finer and finer blossoms the older you grow."[5] In what follows he is at pains to show that good works will depend on the constant putting into

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 553. [2] *Ib.*, p. 548.
[3] *Ib.* [4] *Ib.*, p. 549. [5] *Ib.*, p. 554.

practice of the "faith"; the Justification that is won by the "*fides specialis*" is insufficient, in spite of all the comfort it brings; rather we must be mindful of the saying of St. Paul: "If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live." "But if your flesh won't do it, then leave it to the Holy Ghost."[1]

The motive for good works which Luther here advances, viz. "To thank God, to praise and extol Him,"[2] is worthy of special attention; it is the only real one he furnishes either here or elsewhere. Owing to the love of God which arises in the heart at the thought of His benefits we must rouse ourselves to serve Him. The idea is a grand one and had always appealed to the noblest spirits in the Church before Luther's day. It is, however, a very different thing to represent this motive of perfect love as the exclusive and only true incentive to doing what is pleasing to God. Yet throughout Luther's teaching this is depicted as the general, necessary and only motive. "From faith and the Holy Ghost necessarily comes the love of God, and together with it love of our neighbour and every good work."[3] When I realise by faith that God has sent His Son for my sake, etc., says Luther, in his Church-Postils, "I cannot do otherwise than love Him in return, do His behests and keep His commandments."[4] This love, however, as he expressly states, must be altogether unselfish, i.e. must be what the Old Testament calls a "whole-hearted love," which in turn "presupposes perfect self-denial."[5]

It is plain that we have here an echo of the mysticism which had at one time held him in thrall;[6] but his extravagant idealism was making demands which ordinary Christians either never, or only very seldom, could attain to.

The olden Church set up before the faithful a number of motives adapted to rouse them to do good works; such motives she found in the holy fear of God and His chastisements, in the hope of temporal or everlasting reward; in the need of making satisfaction for sin committed, or, finally, for those who had advanced furthest, in the love of God, whether as the most perfect Being and deserving of all our

[1] *Ib.*, p. 555.
[2] Cp. p. 552: "Help me that I may, with gratitude, praise and exalt Thy Son."
[3] Köstlin's summary, *ib.*, p. 206.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 40. Cp. "Opp. lat. exeg.," 13, p. 144.
[5] Köstlin, *ib.*, p. 207.
[6] Cp. vol. i., *passim*.

love, or on account of the benefits received from Him; she invited people to weld all these various motives into one strong bond; those whose dispositions were less exalted she strove to animate with the higher motives of love, so far as the weakness of human nature allowed. Luther, on the contrary, in the case of the righteous already assured of salvation, not only excluded every motive other than love, but also, quite unjustifiably, refused to hear of any love save that arising from gratitude for the redemption and the faith. "To love God," in his eyes, "is nothing more than to be grateful for the benefit bestowed" (through the redemption).[1] And, again, he imputes such power to this sadly curtailed motive of love, or rather gratitude, that it is his only prescription, even for those who are so cold-hearted that the Word of God "comes in at one ear and goes out at the other," and who hear of the death of Christ with as little devotion as though they had been told, "that the Turks had beaten the Sultan, or some other such tit-bit of news."[2]

Some notable Omissions of Luther's in the above Sermons on Morality

Hitherto we have been considering what Luther had to say on the question of faith and morality in his last sermons. It remains to point out what he did not say, and what, on account of his own doctrines, it was impossible for him to say; as descriptive of his ethics the latter is perhaps of even greater importance.

In the first place he says nothing of the supernatural life, which, according to the ancient teaching of the Church, begins with the infusion of sanctifying grace in the soul of the man who is justified. As we know, he would not hear of this new and vital principle in the righteous, which indeed was incompatible with his theory of the mere non-imputation of sin. Further, he also ignores the so-called "infused virtues" whence, with the help of actual grace, springs the new motive force of the man received into the Divine sonship. By his denial of the complete renewal of the inner man he placed himself in opposition to the ancient witnesses of Christendom, as Protestant historians of dogma now admit.[3]

[1] Köstlin, *ib.*, p. 204. [2] In the Eisleben Sermons, p. 548.
[3] On Luther's attitude towards the supernatural moral order, see xxix., 5.

Secondly, he dismisses in silence the so-called actual grace. Not even in answering the question as to the source whence the believer draws strength and ability to strive after what is good, does he refer to it, so hostile is his whole system to any co-operation between the natural and the supernatural in man.

Thirdly, he does not give its due to man's freedom in co-operating in the doing of what is good; it is true he does not expressly deny it, but it was his usual practice in his addresses to the people to say as little as possible of his doctrine of the enslaved will.[1] Along with faith, however, he extols the Holy Ghost. "Leave it to the Holy Ghost!" Indeed faith itself, and the strong feeling which should accompany it, are exclusively the work of the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Ghost alone Who believes, and feels, and works in man, according to Luther's teaching elsewhere. This action of God alone is something different from actual grace. In the instructions he gave to Melanchthon in 1536 concerning justification and works,[2] Luther entirely ignores any action on man's part as a free agent, and yet here we have the "clearest expression" of his doctrine of how good works follow on justification. The Protestant author of "Luthers Theologie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung" remarks of this work (and the same applies to the above sermons and other statements): "Luther is always desirous, on the one hand of depreciating man's claim to personal worth and merit, and on the other by his testimony to God's mercy in Christ, of furthering faith and the impulses and desires which spring from faith and the spirit; here, too, he says nothing of any choice as open to man between the Divine impulses working within him and those of his sinful nature."[3]

Fourthly, and most important of all, Luther says nothing of the true significance of morality for the attainment of everlasting life.

The best and theologically most convincing reply to the objection of which he spoke: "Well and good, then I shall sin lustily," etc. would have been: No, a good moral life is essential for salvation! The strongest Bible texts would have been there to back such a statement, and, to his powerful eloquence, it should have proved an attractive task to crush his frivolous opponents by so weighty an argument. Yet we find never a word concerning the necessity of good works for salvation, but merely an account of the wonders worked by faith of its own accord alone *after* it has laid hold on the heart. This is readily understood, if justification is purely passive and effected solely by the Spirit of God which enkindles faith and, with it, covers over sin as with a shield, then the very being of the life of faith must be mere passivity, and there can be no more question of attaining to salvation by means of good deeds performed with the aid of grace. In the instruction for Melanchthon mentioned above we find at

[1] Cp. vol. ii., p. 223 ff., particularly p. 240 ff.
[2] See above, p. 32, n. 4.
[3] Köstlin, *ib.*, p. 206.

the end this clear query: "Is this saying true: Righteousness by works is necessary for salvation?" Luther answers by a distinction: "Not as if works operate or bring about salvation," he says, "but rather they are present together with the faith that operates righteousness; just as of necessity I must be present in order to be saved." This distinction, however, leaves the question just where it was before. He concludes his remarks on this vital matter with a jest on the purely external and fortuitous presence of works in the man received into eternal life: "I too shall be in at the death, said the rascal when he was about to be hanged and many people were hurrying to see the scene."[1]

All the more strongly did Luther in his usual way describe in his last sermon the natural sinfulness which persists in man owing to original sin.

The sin that still dwells within us "forces" man to prevent faith and works coming to their own.[2] For "he is not yet without sin, though he has the forgiveness of sins and is sanctified by the Holy Ghost." In consequence of the "foulness" within him "the longer he lives the worse he gets." "We cannot get rid of our sinful body."[3] For this reason even the "best minds" so often are indifferent to eternal life. On account of the evil taint in our flesh we are unable to rise as high as we ought.[4] But if original sin and its workings were declared really sinful in man (for even the very motions against "heartfelt pleasure" in God's service are, so we are told, "sins"[5]), then it is no wonder that Luther should have been confronted with the question of which he speaks: "If sin be in me, how then can I be pleasing to God?"—a question which formerly could not have been asked of those whose original sin had been washed away in baptism. The teaching of the olden Church had been, that original sin was blotted out by baptism, but that the inclination to evil persisted in man to his last breath, though without any fault on his part so long as consent was lacking.[6]

Still less to be wondered at was it, that many, unable to regard themselves as responsible or guilty on account of the involuntary motions of original sin, began to doubt whether any responsibility existed for evil actions or whether moral effort was within the bounds of possibility.

Further, according to Luther, our constant exercise of ourselves in faith and our "rubbing" ourselves against sin was finally to lead "not merely to our sins being forgiven but to their

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 346. [2] *Ib.*, 20^2, 2, p. 548.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 545. [4] *Ib.*, p. 549 f. [5] *Ib.*, p. 551.
[6] Luther's opposite doctrine, which is of importance to the matter under consideration, is expressed by Köstlin (*ib.*, p. 126 f.) as follows: Luther "does not make guilt and condemnation follow on the act which is contrary to God's will, nor even on the determination to commit such an act, but on the inward motion, or concupiscence, nay, in the inborn evil propensity [even of the baptised] which exists prior to any conscious motion. . . . We do not find in his writings any further information on the other questions here involved" (e.g. of the children who die unbaptised, etc.).

being altogether rooted up and swept away; for your shabby, smelly body could not enter heaven without first being cleansed and beautified."[1] Taking for granted his mystic assumption that sinful concupiscence can at last be "swept away," he insists on our continuing hopefully "to amend by faith and prayer our weakness and to fight against it until such a change takes place in our sinful body that sin no longer exists therein,"[2] though, in his opinion, this cannot entirely be until we reach heaven. Yet experience, had he but opened his eyes to it, here once again contradicted him. The "*fomes peccati*," as the Catholic Church rightly teaches, cannot be extinguished so long as man is on this earth, though it may be damped, and, by the practice of what is right and the use of the means of grace, be rendered harmless to our moral life. The Church expected nothing unreasonable from man, though her moral standards were of the highest. Luther, however, by abandoning the Church's ethics, came to teach a strange mixture of perverted, unworkable idealism and all too great indulgence towards human frailty.

Luther's Vacillation between the Two Faiths, Old and New, in the Matter of Morality and the Assurance of Salvation

Many discordant utterances, betraying his uncertainty and his struggles, have been bequeathed to us by Luther regarding the main questions of morality and as to how we may insure salvation. First we have his statements with regard to the importance of morality in God's sight.

In 1537 in a Disputation on June 1 he denounced the thesis, "Good works are necessary for salvation."[3] In the same way, in a sermon of 1535, he asserted that it was by no means necessary for us to perform good works "in order to blot out sin, to overcome death and win heaven, but merely for the profit and assistance of our neighbour." "Our works," he there says, "can only shape what concerns our temporal life and being"; higher than this they cannot rise.[4]

Yet, when thus degrading works, he had again and again to struggle within his own heart against the faith of the ancient Church concerning the merit of good deeds. Especially was this the case when he considered the "texts which demand a good life on account of the eternal reward,"[5] for instance, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt. xix. 17), or "Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven" (*ib.*, vi. 20). With them he deals in a sermon of 1522. The eternal reward, he here says, follows the works because it is a result of the faith which

[1] In the Eisleben sermons, *ib.*, p. 551. [2] *Ib.*, p. 546.
[3] "Disputationes," ed. Drews, p. 159. Cp. "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 385. Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 857, n. 4, and 770, n. 4.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19[2], p. 153. [5] *Ib.*, 13[2], p. 307.

itself is the cause of the works. But the believer must not "lock to the reward," or trouble about it. Why then does God promise a reward ?—In order that "all may know what the natural result of a good life will be." Yet he also admits a certain anxiety on the part of the pious Christian to be certain of his reward, and the favourable effect of such a certainty on the good man's will.[1] Here he exhorts his listeners; "that you be content to know and be assured that this indeed will be the result," whilst in another sermon of that same year he describes as follows the promise of eternal life as the reward of works: "It is an incentive and inducement that makes us zealous in piety and in the service and praise of God. . . . That God should guide us so kindly makes us esteem the more His Fatherly Will and the Mercy of Christ" —but on no account "must we be good as if for the sake of the reward."[2] He also quotes incidentally Mt. xix. 29, where our Lord says that all who leave home, brethren, etc. for His name's sake "shall receive a hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting"; also Heb. x. 35 concerning the "great reward" that awaits those who lose not their confidence. Such statements, he refuses, however, to see referred to salvation, which will be the equal portion of all true believers, but, in his arbitrary fashion, explains them as denoting some extra ornament of glory.[3]

"Good works will be present wherever faith is." As this supposition, a favourite one with Luther from early days, fails to verify itself in practice, and as the expedients he proposed to meet the new difficulty are scattered throughout his writings, an admirer in recent times ventured to sum up these elements into a system under the following headings: "Faulty morality is a proof of a faulty faith." "The fact of morality being present proves the presence of faith." "Moral indolence induces loss of faith." "Zeal for morality causes faith to increase."[4] The true explanation would therefore seem always to be in the assumption of a want of "faith," i.e. of a lack of that absolute certainty of personal salvation which should regulate all religious life,[5] in other words moral failings should be held to prove the absence of this saving certainty.

Seen in this light good works are of importance, as the outward demonstration that a person possesses the "*fides specialis*," and in this wise alone are they a guarantee of everlasting happiness. They prove "before the world and before his own conscience" that a Christian really has the "faith." This is what Luther expressly teaches in his Church-Postils: "Therefore hold fast to this, that a man who is inwardly a Christian is justified before God solely by faith and without any works; but outwardly and publicly, before the people and to himself, he is justified by works, i.e. he becomes known to others as, and certain in himself

[1] *Ib.*, p. 305 ff. [2] *Ib.*, 15², p. 524. Köstlin, *ib.*, p. 213.
[3] Cp. *ib.*, 43, p. 362 ff.
[4] The headings in W. Walther's "Die Sittlichkeit nach Luther," pp. 100, 106, 120, 125 are as above. [5] Above, p. 32 f.

that, he is inwardly just, believing and pious. Thus you may term one an open or outward justification and the other an inward justification."[1] Hence Luther's certainty of salvation, however strong it may be, still requires to be tested by something else as to whether it is the true "faith" deserving of God's compassion; for "it is quite possible for a man never to doubt God's mercy towards him though all the while he does not really possess it"; [2] according to Luther, namely, there is such a thing as a fictitious faith.

In Luther's opinion "faith" was a grasping of something actually there. Hence if God's mercy was not there, then neither was there any "faith." Accordingly, an "unwarrantable assurance of salvation" was not at all impossible, and works served as a means of detecting it. Walther, to whom we owe our summary, does not, it is true, prove the existence of such a state of "unwarrantable assurance" by any direct quotation from Luther's writings, and, indeed, it might be difficult to find any definite statement to this effect, seeing that Luther was chary of speaking of any failure in the personal certainty of salvation, on which alone, exclusive of works, he based the whole work of justification.

And yet, as Luther himself frequently says, moods and feelings are no guarantee of true faith; what is required are the works, which, like good fruit, always spring from a good tree.—So strongly, in spite of all his predilection for faith alone, is he impelled again and again to have recourse to works. In many passages they tend to become something more than mere signs confirmatory of faith. We need not examine here how far his statements concerning faith and works are consistent, and to what extent the sane Catholic teaching continued to influence him.

What is remarkable, however, is, that, in his commendable efforts to urge the performance of works in order to curtail the pernicious results of his doctrine, Luther comes to attribute a saving action to "faith," only on condition that, out of love of God, we "strive" against sin. In one of his last sermons at Eisleben he tells his hearers: Sins are forgiven by faith and "are not imputed *so far as you set yourself to fight against them*, and learn to repeat the Our Father diligently . . . and to grow in strength as you grow in age; and you must be at pains to exercise your faith by resisting the sins that remain in you . . . in short, you must become stronger, humbler, more patient and believe more firmly."[3] The conditional "so far as" furnishes a key which has to be used in many other passages where works are demanded as well as faith. Faith, there, is real and wholesome "in so far as" it produces works: "For we too admit it and have always taught it, better and more forcibly than they [the Papists], that we must both preach and perform works, and that they must follow the faith, and, that, where they do not follow there the faith is not as it should be."[4]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 304 f. [2] Walther, *ib.*, p. 102.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 553. [4] *Ib.*, 12^2, p. 219.

Nor does he merely say that works of charity must follow eventually, but that charity must be infused by the Spirit of God together with faith of which it is the fruit.

"For though faith makes us righteous and pure, yet it cannot be without love, and the Spirit must infuse love together with faith. In short, where there is true faith, there the Holy Ghost is also present, and where the Holy Ghost is, there love and all good things must also be. . . . Love is a consequence or fruit of the Spirit which comes to us wrapped up in the faith."[1] "Charity is so closely bound up [with faith and hope] that it can never be parted from faith where this is true faith, and as little as there can be fire without heat and smoke, so little can faith exist without charity."[2] From gratitude (as we have heard him state above, p. 26) the man who is assured of salvation must be "well disposed towards God and keep His commandments." But if he be "sweetly disposed towards God" this must "show itself in all charity."

Taking the words at their face value we might find in these and similar statements on charity something reminiscent of the Catholic doctrine of a faith working through love.[3] But though this is what Luther should logically have arrived at, he was in reality always kept far from it by his idea both of faith and of imputation. It should be noted that he was fond of taking shelter behind the assertion, that his "faith" also included, or was accompanied by, charity. He was obliged to do this in self-defence against the objections of certain Evangelicals—who rushed to conclusions he would not accept—or of Catholic opponents. Indeed, in order to pacify the doubters, he even went so far as to say, that love preceded the "faith" he taught, and that "faith" itself was simply a work like any other work done for the fulfilling of the commandments.

[1] *Ib.*, 8^2, p. 119, in the exposition of 1 Cor. xiii. 2: "And though I had all faith and could remove mountains and had not charity, I am nothing." [2] *Ib.*, 15^2, p. 40.

[3] Willibald Pirkheimer confronted Luther with the following statement of the Catholic teaching: "We know that free-will of itself without grace cannot suffice. We refer all things back to the Divine grace, but we believe, that, after the reception of that grace without which we are nothing, we still have to perform our rightful service. We are ever subject to the action of grace and always unite our efforts with grace. . . . But whoever believes that grace alone suffices even without any exercise of our will or subduing of our desire, such a one does nothing else but declare that no one is obliged to pray, watch, fast, take pity on the needy, or perform works of mercy," etc. "Opp.," ed. Goldast, p. 375 *sqq.*, in Drews, "Pirkheimers Stellung zur Reformation," Leipzig, 1884, p. 119.

It was in this sense that he wrote in the "Sermon von den guten Wercken," composed at the instance of his prudent friend Spalatin for the Duke of Saxony: "Such trust and faith brings with it charity and hope; indeed, if we look at the matter aright, charity comes first, or at least simultaneously with faith. For I should not care to trust God unless I believed He would be kindly and gracious to me, whereby I am well disposed towards Him, trust Him heartily and perform all that is good in His sight." In the same connection he characterises "faith" as a "work of the first Commandment," and as a "true keeping of that command," and as the "first, topmost and best work from which all others flow."[1] It might seem, though this is but apparent, that he had actually come to acknowledge the reality and merit of man's works, in the teeth of his denial of free-will and of the possibility of meriting.

Of charity as involved in faith he wrote in a similar strain in 1519 to Johann Silvius Egranus, who at that time still belonged to his party, but was already troubled with scruples concerning the small regard shown for ethical motives and the undue stress laid on faith alone: "I do not separate justifying faith from charity," Luther told him, "on the contrary we believe because God, in Whom we believe, pleases us and is loved by us." To him all this was quite clear and plain, but the new-comers who had busied themselves with faith, hope and charity "understood not one of the three."[2]

We may recall how the enquiring mind of Egranus was by no means entirely satisfied by this explanation. In 1534 he published a bitter attack on the Lutheran doctrine of works, though he never returned more than half-way from Lutheranism to the olden Church.[3]

Many, like Silvius Egranus, who at the outset had been won over to the new religion, took fright when they saw that, owing to the preference shown to faith (i.e. the purely personal assurance of salvation), the ethical principles regarding Christian perfection and man's aim in life, received but scant consideration.

Many truly saw therein an alarming abasement of the moral standard and accordingly returned to the doctrine of their fathers. As the ideal to be aimed at throughout life the Church had set up before them progress in the love of God, encouraging them to put this love in practice by fidelity to the duties of their calling and by a humble and confident trust in God's Fatherly promises rather than in any perilous "*fides specialis*."

In previous ages Christian perfection had rightly been thought to consist in the development of the moral virtues, particularly

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 131.
[2] Feb. 2, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 408. [3] See vol. iii., p. 462 ff.

of charity, the queen of all the others. Now, however, Luther represented "the consoling faith in the forgiveness of sins as the sum of Christian perfection."[1] According to him the "real essence of personal Christianity lies in the confidence of the justified sinner that he shares the paternal love of the Almighty of which he has been assured by the work and person of Jesus Christ." In this sense alone can he be said to have "rediscovered Christianity" as a religion. We are told that "the essence of Lutheran Christianity is to be found in Luther's reduction of practical Christianity to the doctrine of salvation."[2] He "altered the ideal of religious perfection as no other Christian before his day had ever done." The "revulsion" in moral ideals which this necessarily involved spelt "a huge decline."[3]

George Wicel, who, after having long been an adherent of Lutheranism, broke away from it in consequence of the moral results referred to, wrote, in 1533, with much bitterness in the defence he addressed to Justus Jonas: "Amongst you one hears of nothing but of remitting and forgiving; you don't seem to see that your seductions sow more sins than ever you can take away. Your people, it is true, are so constituted that they will only hear of the forgiving and never of the retaining of sin (John xx. 23); evidently they stand more in need of being loosed than of being bound. Ah, you comfortable theologians! You are indeed sharp-sighted enough in all this business, for were you to bind as often as you loose, you, the ringleaders of the party, would soon find yourselves all alone with your faith, and might then withdraw into some hole to weep for the loss of your authority and congregation." "Ah, you rascals, what a fine Evangelical mode of life have you wrought with your preachment on grace."[4]

5. Abasement of Practical Christianity

To follow up the above statement emanating from a Protestant source, concerning the "huge decline" in moral ideals and practical Christianity involved in Luther's work, we shall go on to consider how greatly he did in point of fact narrow and restrict ethical effort in comparison with what was required by the ethics of earlier days. In so doing he was following the psychological impulse discernible even in the first beginnings of his dislike for the austerity of his Order and the precepts of the Church.

[1] Adolf Harnack, "DG.," 3^4, p. 850.
[2] Loofs, "DG.," ^{4}, p. 698, n. 1, p. 737.
[3] Harnack, *ib.*, p. 831 f.
[4] "Confutatio calumn. resp.," E 2a. Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 39.

Lower Moral Standards

1. The only works of obligation in the service of God are faith, praise and thanksgiving. God, he says, demands only our faith, our praise and our gratitude. Of our works He has no need.[1] He restricts our "deeds towards God" to the praise-offering or thank-offering for the good received, and to the prayer-offering "or Our Father, against the evil and badness we would wish to be rid of."[2] This service is the duty of each individual Christian and is practised in common in Divine worship. The latter is fixed and controlled with the tacit consent of the congregation by the ministers who represent the people; in this we find the trace of Luther's innate aversion to any law or obligation which leads him to avoid anything savouring of legislative action.[3]

In the preface to his instructions to the Visitors in 1528 he declares, for instance, that the rules laid down were not meant to "found new Papal Decretals"; they were rather to be taken as a "history of and witness to our faith" and not as "strict commands."[4] This well expresses his antipathy to the visible Catholic Church, her hierarchy and her so-called man-made ordinances for public worship.

Since, to his mind, it is impossible to offer God anything but love, thanksgiving and prayer, it follows that, firstly, the Eucharistic Sacrifice falls, and, with it, all the sacrifices made to the greater glory of God by self-denial and abnegation, obedience or bodily penances, together with all those works—practised in imitation of Christ by noble souls—done over and above the bounden duties of each one's calling. He held that it was wrong to say of such sacrifices, made by contrite and loving hearts, that they were both to God's glory and to our own advantage, or to endeavour to justify them by arguing that: Whoever does not do great things for God must expect small recompense. Among the things which fell before him were: vows, processions, pilgrimages, veneration of relics and of the Saints, ecclesi-

[1] Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 208.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 33. [3] Köstlin, *ib.*, pp. 284, 295.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 200; Erl. ed., 23, p. 9. Köstlin, however (p. 275 f.), points out that Luther nevertheless threatens those who refuse to accept his injunctions. Cp. below, xxix., 9.

astical blessings and sacramentals, not to speak of holy days and prescribed fasts. With good reason can one speak of a " huge decline."

He justifies as follows his radical opposition to the Catholic forms of Divine worship : " The only good we can do in God's service is to praise and thank Him, in which in fact the only true worship of God consists. . . . If any other worship of God be proposed to you, know that it is error and deception."[1] " It is a rank scandal that the Papists should encourage people to toil for God with works so as thereby to expiate their sins and secure grace. . . . If you wish to believe aright and really to lay hold on Christ, you must discard all works whereby you may think you labour for God ; all such are nothing but scandals leading you away from Christ and from God ; in God's sight no work is of any value except Christ's own ; this you must leave to toil for you in God's sight ; you yourself must perform no other work for Him than to believe that Christ does His work for you."[2]

In the same passage he attempts to vindicate this species of Quietism with the help of some recollections from his own earlier career, viz. by the mystic principle which had at one time ruled him : " You must be blind and lame, deaf and dead, poor and leprous, or else you will be scandalised in Christ. This is what it means to know Christ aright and to accept Him ; this is to believe as befits a true Christian."[3]

2. " All other works, apart from faith, must be directed towards our neighbour."[4] As we know, besides that faith, gratitude and love which are God's due, Luther admits no good works but those of charity towards our neighbour. By our faith we give to God all that He asks of us. " After this, think only of doing for your neighbour what Christ has done for you, and let all your works and all your life go to the service of your neighbour."[5]—God, he says elsewhere, asks only for our thank-offering ; " look upon Me as a Gracious God and I am content " ; " thereafter serve your neighbour, freely and for nothing."[6] Good works in his eyes are only " good when they are profitable to others and not to

[1] " Werke," *ib.*, 7^2, p. 68. [2] *Ib.*, 10^2, p. 108.
[3] On dying spiritually, cp. vol. i., p. 169 and *passim*.
[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 108. [5] *Ib.*
[6] " Werke," Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 206.

yourself." Indeed he goes so far as to assert: "If you find yourself performing a work for God, or for His Saints, or for yourself and not alone for your neighbour, know that the work is not good."[1] The only explanation of such sentences, as already hinted, is to be found in his passionate polemics against the worship and the pious exercises of the Catholics. It is true that such practices were sullied at that time by certain blemishes, owing to the abuses rampant in the Church; yet the Catholic could confidently answer in self-defence in the words Luther proceeds to put on his lips: Such "works are spiritual and profitable to the soul of our neighbour, and God thereby is served and propitiated and His Grace obtained."

Luther rudely retorts: "You lie in your throat; God is served not by works but by faith; faith must do everything that is to be done as between God and ourselves." That the priests and monks should vaunt their religious exercises as spiritual treasures, he brands as a "Satanic lie." "The works of the Papists such as organ-playing, chanting, vesting, ringing, smoking [incensation], sprinkling, pilgriming and fasting, etc., are doubtless fine and many, grand and long, broad and thick works, but about them there is nothing good, useful or profitable."

3. "Know that there are no good works but such as God has commanded." What, apart from faith, makes a work a good one is solely God's express command. Luther, while finding fault with the self-chosen works of the Catholics, points to the Ten Commandments as summing up every good work willed by God. "There used to be ecclesiastical precepts which were to supersede the Decalogue." "The commandments of the Church were invented and set up by men in addition to and beyond God's Word. Luther therefore deals with the true worship of God in the light of the Ten Commandments."[2] As for the Evangelical Counsels so solemnly enacted in the New Testament, viz. the striving after a perfection which is not of obligation, Luther, urged on by his theory that only what is actually commanded

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 25. Cp. on Luther's restriction of good works to practical love of our neighbour, vol. iv., p. 477 ff., and above, p. 26, 38 f.

[2] Chr. E. Luthardt, "Die Ethik Luthers in ihren Grundzügen," ^{2}, 1875, p. 70.

partakes of the nature of a good work, came very near branding them as an invention of the Papists.

They have "made the Counsels twelve" in number,[1] he says, "and twist the Gospel as they please." They have split the Gospel into two, into "*Consilia et præcepta.*" "Christ," so he teaches, "gave only one Counsel in the whole of the Gospel, viz. that of chastity, which even a layman can preserve, assuming him to have the grace." He sneers at the Pope and the Doctors because they had established not only a clerical order which should be superior to the laity, but also an order of the counsels the duty of whose members it was to portray the Evangelical perfection by the keeping of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. "By this the common Christian life and faith became like flat, sour beer; everyone rubbed his eyes, despised the commandments and ran after the counsels. And after a good while they at last discovered man-made ordinances in the shape of habits, foods, chants, lessons, tonsures, etc., and thus God's Law went the way of faith, both being blotted out and forgotten, so that, henceforth, to be perfect and to live according to the counsels means to wear a black, white, grey or coloured cowl, to bawl in church, wear a tonsure and to abstain from eggs, meat, butter, etc."[2]

In the heat of his excitement he even goes so far as to deny the necessity of any service in the churches, because God demands only the praise and thanks of the heart, and "this may be given . . . equally well in the home, in the field, or anywhere else." "If they should force any other service upon you, know that it is error and deception; just as hitherto the world has been crazy, with its houses, churches and monasteries set aside for the worship of God, and its vestments of gold and silk, etc. . . . which expenditure had better been used to help our neighbour, if it was really meant for God."[3]

It was of course impossible for him to vindicate in the long run so radical a standpoint concerning the churches, and, elsewhere, he allows people their own way on the question of liturgical vestments and other matters connected with worship.

4. The good works which are performed where there is no "faith" amount to sin. This strangely unethical assertion Luther is fond of repeating in so extravagant a form as can only be explained psychologically by the utter blindness of his bias in favour of the "*fides specialis*" by him discovered. True morality belongs solely to those who have been justified after his own fashion, and no others have the slightest right to credit themselves with anything of the sort.

[1] Cp. "Compend. totius theol. Hugonis Argentorat. o.p.," V. cap. ult.
[2] Quoted from Luthardt, *ib.*, pp. 70–73.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 68.

When, in 1528, in his "Great Confession" he expounded his "belief bit by bit," declaring that he had "most diligently weighed all these articles" as in the presence of death and judgment, he there wrote: "Herewith I reject and condemn as rank error every doctrine that exalts our free-will, which is directly opposed to the help and grace of our Saviour Jesus Christ. For seeing, that, outside of Christ, death and sin are our masters and the devil our God and sovereign, there can be no power or might, no wit or understanding whereby we could make ourselves fit for, or could even strive after, righteousness and life, but on the contrary we must remain blind and captive, slaves of sin and the devil, and must do what pleases them and runs counter to God and His Commandments."[1] Even the most pious of the Papists, he goes on to say, since they lack Christ and the "Faith," have "merely a great semblance of holiness," and although "there seem to be many good works" among them, "yet all is lost"; chastity, poverty and obedience as practised in the convents is nothing but "blasphemous holiness," and "what is horrible is that thereby they refuse Christ's help and grace."[2]

This, his favourite idea, finds its full expression in his learned Latin Commentary on Galatians (1535): "In the man who does not believe in Christ not only are all sins mortal, but even his good works are sins";[3] for the benefit of the people he enunciates the same in his Church-Postils. "The works performed without faith are sins . . . for such works of ours are soiled and foul in God's eyes, nay, He looks on them with horror and loathing." As a matter of course he thinks that God looks upon concupiscence as sin, even in its permissible manifestations, e.g. in the "*opus conjugalis*." Amongst the heathen even virtues such as patriotism, continence, justice and courage in which, owing to the divine impulses ("*divini motus*"), they may shine, are tainted by the presence in them of original sin ("*in ipsis heroicis virtutibus depravata*").[4] As to whether such men were saved, Luther refuses to say anything definite; he holds fast to the text that without faith it is impossible to please God. Only those who, in the days of Noe, did not believe may, so he declares, be saved in accordance with his reading of 1 Peter iii. 19 by Christ's preaching of salvation on the occasion of His descent into hell. He is also disposed to include among those saved by this supposed course of sermons delivered "*in inferis*," such fine men of every nation as Scipio, Fabius and others of their like.[5]

In general, however, the following holds good: Before "faith and grace" are infused into the heart "by the Spirit alone," "as the work of God which He works in us"—everything in

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 502 f.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 365.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 507, 509=370, 372.
[3] Ed. Irmischer, 3, p. 25. Cp. Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 705.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed. 15^2, p. 60. "Opp. lat. exeg.," 2, p. 273 *sqq.*; 19, p. 18; 24, p. 463, *sq.* "Disputationes," ed. Drews, pp. 115, 172.
[5] Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 169 f., the passages quoted.

man is the "work of the Law, of no value for justification, but unholy and opposed to God owing to the unbelief in which it is performed."[1]

Annulment of the Supernatural and Abasement of the Natural Order

From the above statements it is clear that Luther, in doing away with the distinction between the natural and supernatural order, also did away with the olden doctrine of virtue, and without setting up anything positive in its place. He admits no naturally good action different from that performed "by faith and grace"; no such thing exists as a natural, moral virtue of justice. This opinion is closely bound up with his whole warfare on man's natural character and endowments in respect of what is good. Moreover, what he terms the state of grace is not the supernatural state the Church had always understood, but an outward imputation by God; it is indeed God's goodness towards man, but no new vital principle thanks to which we act justly.[2]

Not only does he deny the distinction between natural and supernatural goodness, essential as it is for forming an ethical estimate of man, but he practically destroys both the natural and supernatural order. Even in other points of Luther's doctrine we can notice the abrogation of the fundamental difference between the two orders; for instance in his view of Adam's original state, which, according to him, was a natural not a supernatural one, "no gift," as he says, "apart from man's nature, and bestowed on him from without, but a natural righteousness so that it came natural to him to love God [as he did], to believe in Him and to acknowledge Him."[3] It is, however, in the moral domain that this peculiarity of his new theology comes out most glaringly. Owing to his way of proceeding and the heat of his polemics he seems never to have become fully conscious of how far-reaching the consequences were of his

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 340; Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 261.—For the theological and psychological influences which led him to these statements, see vol. i., pp. 72 ff., 149 ff.

[2] Cp. what Luther says in his Comm. on Romans in 1515–16: It depends entirely "on the gracious Will of God whether a thing is to be good or evil," and "Nothing is of its own nature good, nothing of its own nature evil," etc., vol. i., p. 211 f.

[3] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 1, p. 109, "In Genesim," c. 3,

destruction of all distinction between the natural and the supernatural order.

Natural morality, viz. that to which man attains by means of his unaided powers, appears to him simply an invention of the pagan Aristotle. He rounds on all the theologians of his day for having swallowed so dangerous an error in their Aristotelian schools to the manifest detriment of the divine teaching. This he does, for instance, at the commencement of his recently published Commentary on Romans. He calls it a "righteousness of the philosophers and lawyers" in itself utterly worthless.[1] A year later, in his manuscript Commentary on Hebrews, he has already reached the opinion, that, "the virtues of all the philosophers, nay, of all men, whether they be lawyers or theologians, have only a semblance of virtue, but in reality are vices ('*vitia*')."[2]

But what would be quite incomprehensible, had he actually read the scholastic theologians whose "civil, Aristotelian doctrine of justice" he was so constantly attacking, is, that he charges them with having stopped short at this natural justice and with not having taught anything higher; this higher justice was what he himself had brought to light, this was the "Scriptural justice which depended more on the Divine imputation than on the nature of things,"[3] and was not acquired by deeds but bestowed by God. The fact is, however, that the Schoolmen did not rest content merely with natural justice, but insist that true justice is something higher, supernatural and only to be attained to with the help of grace; it is only in some few later theologians with whom Luther may possibly have been acquainted, that this truth fails to find clear expression. Thomas of Aquin, for instance, distinguishes between the civil virtue of justice and the justice infused in the act of justification. He says expressly: "A man may be termed just in two ways, on account of civil [natural] justice and on account of infused justice. Civil justice is attained to without the grace which comes to the assistance of the natural powers, but infused justice is the work of grace. Neither the one nor the other, however, consists in the mere doing of

[1] See vol. i., p. 148 f. Cp. Denifle-Weiss, 1^2, p. 527, n. 1.
[2] Denifle-Weiss, *ib.*, p. 528, n. 2.
[3] Denifle-Weiss, *ib.*, p. 527. Cp. our vol. i., p. 148 f.

what is good, for not everyone who does what is good is just, but only he who does it as do the just."[1]

With regard to supernatural (infused) justice, the Church's representatives, quite differently from Luther, had taught that man by his natural powers could only attain to God as the Author of nature but not to God as He is in Himself, i.e. to God as He has revealed and will communicate Himself in heaven; it is infused, sanctifying grace alone that places us in a higher order than that of nature and raises us to the status of being children of God; in it we love God, by virtue of the "habit" of love bestowed upon us, as He is in Himself, i.e. as He wills to be loved; sanctifying grace it is that brings us into a true relation with our supernatural and final end, viz. the vision of God in heaven, in which sense it may be called a vital principle infused into the soul.[2]

This language Luther either did not or would not understand. On this point particularly he had to suffer for his ignorance of the better class of theologians. He first embraced Occam's hypothesis of the *possibility* of an imputation of justice, and then, going further along the wrong road, he changed this possibility into a reality; soon, owing to his belief in the entire corruption of the natural man, imputed justice became, to him, the only justice. In this way he deprived theology of supernatural as well as of natural justice; for imputed justice is really no justice at all, but merely an alien one. "With Luther we have the end of the supernatural. His basic view, of justifying faith as the work of God in us performed without our co-operation, bears indeed a semblance of the supernatural. . . . But the supernatural is ever something alien."[3]

What he had in his mind was always a foreign righteousness produced, not by man's own works and acts performed under the help of grace, but only by the work of another; this we are told by Luther in so many words: "True and real piety which is of worth in God's sight consists in alien works and not in our own."[4] "If we wish to work for God we must not approach Him with our own works but with foreign ones." "These are the works of Our Lord Jesus Christ." "All that He has is ours. . . . I may attribute to myself all His works as though I had actually done them, if only I believe in Christ. . . . Our works

[1] "In 2 Sent.," dist. 28, a. 1 ad 4. Denifle-Weiss, *ib.*, p. 482, n. 1. Cp. Luther's frequent statement, already sufficiently considered in our vol. iv., p. 476 f., in which he sums up his new standpoint: Good works never make a good man, but good men perform good works.

[2] Cp. Denifle-Weiss, *ib.*, p. 598.

[3] Denifle-Weiss, p. 604. Cp. also p. 600, n. 2, where Denifle remarks: "Being an Occamist he never understood actual grace."

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 60. After the words quoted above follows the remarkable passage: One builds churches, another makes pilgrimages, etc. "These are self-chosen works which God has not commanded. . . . Such self-chosen works are nought . . . are sin."

will not suffice, all our powers together are too weak to resist even the smallest sin. . . . Hence when the Law comes and accuses you of not having kept it, send it to Christ and say: There is the Man who has fulfilled it, to Him I cling, He has fulfilled it for me and bestowed His fulfilment of it upon me; then the Law will have to hold its tongue."[1]

The Book of Concord on the Curtailment of Free-Will.

When orthodox Lutheranism gained a local and temporary victory in 1580 with the so-called Book of Concord, the authors of the book deplored the inferences drawn from Luther's moral teaching, particularly from his denial of free-will, the dangers of which had already long been apparent.

"It is not unknown to us," they say, "that this holy doctrine of the malice and impotence of free-will, the doctrine whereby our conversion and regeneration is ascribed solely to God and in no way to our own powers, has been godlessly, shamelessly and hatefully abused. . . . Many are becoming immoral and savage and neglectful of all pious exercises; they say: 'Since we cannot turn to God of our own natural powers, let us remain hostile to God or wait until He converts us by force and against our will.'" "It is true that they possess no power to act in spiritual things, and that the whole business of conversion is merely the work of the Holy Ghost. And thus they refuse to listen to the Word of God, or to study it, or to receive the Sacraments; they prefer to wait until God infuses His gifts into them directly from above, and until they feel and are certain by inward experience that they have been converted by God."

"Others," they continue, speaking of the case as a possibility and not as a sad reality, "may possibly give themselves up to sad and dangerous doubts as to whether they have been predestined by God to heaven, and as to whether God will really work His gifts in them by the help of the Holy Ghost. Being weak and troubled in mind they do not grasp aright our pious doctrine of free-will, and they are confirmed in their doubts by the fact that they do not find within themselves any firm and ardent faith or hearty devotion to God, but only weakness, misery and fear." The authors then proceed to deal with the widespread fear of predestination to hell.[2]

We have as it were a sad monument set up to the morality of the enslaved will and the doctrine of imputation, when the Book of Concord, in spite of the sad results it has just

[1] *Ib.*, p. 61 f.
[2] "Symb. Bücher," ed. Müller-Kolde, [10], p. 599 f.

admitted, goes on in the same chapter to insist that all Luther's principles should be preserved intact. "This matter Dr. Luther settled most excellently and thoroughly in his '*De servo arbitrio*' against Erasmus, where he showed this opinion to be pious and irrefutable. Later on he repeated and further explained the same doctrine in his splendid Commentary on Genesis, particularly in his exposition of ch. xxvi. There, too, he made other matters clear—e.g. the doctrine of the '*absoluta necessitas*'—defended them against the objections of Erasmus and, by his pious explanations, set them above all evil insinuations and misrepresentations. All of which we here corroborate and commend to the diligent study of all."[1]

Melanchthon's and his school's modifications of these extreme doctrines are here sharply repudiated, though Luther himself "never spoke with open disapproval" of Melanchthon's Synergism.[2]

"From our doctrinal standpoint," we there read, "it is plain that the teaching of the Synergists is false, who allege that man in spiritual things is not *altogether* dead to what is good but merely badly wounded and *half* dead. . . . They teach wrongly, that after the Holy Spirit has given us, through the Evangel, grace, forgiveness and salvation, then free-will is able to meet God by its natural powers and . . . co-operate with the Holy Ghost. In reality the ability to lay hold upon grace ('*facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*') is solely due to the working of the Holy Ghost."

What then is man to do, and how are the consequences described above to be obviated, on the one hand libertinism, on the other fear of predestination to hell?

Man still possesses a certain freedom, so the Book of Concord teaches, e.g. "to be present or not at the Church's assemblies, to listen or close his ears to the Word of God."

"The preaching of the Word of God is however the tool whereby the Holy Ghost seeks to effect man's conversion and to make him ready to will and to work ('*in ipsis et velle et perficere operari vult*')." "Man is free to open his ears to the Word of God or to read it even when not yet converted to God or born again. In some way or other man still has free-will in such outward things even since Adam's Fall." Hence, by the Word, "by

[1] *Ib.* The Thesis of man's lack of freedom is bluntly expressed on p. 589, and in the sequel it is pointed out that in Luther's larger Catechism not one word is found concerning free-will. Reference is made to his comparison of man with the lifeless pillar of salt (p. 593), and to Augustine's "Confessions" (p. 596).

[2] The last remark is from Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 857. Cp. our vol. iii., p. 348 ff. and *passim*.

the preaching and contemplation of the sweet Evangel of the forgiveness of sins, the spark of 'faith' is enkindled in his heart."[1]

"Although all effort without the power and work of the Holy Spirit is worthless, yet neither the preacher nor the hearer must doubt of this grace or work of the Holy Spirit," so long as the preacher proceeds according to God's will and command and "the hearer listens earnestly and diligently and dwells on what he hears." We are not to judge of the working of the Holy Ghost by our feelings, but "agreeably with the promises of God's Word." We must hold that "the Word preached is the organ of the Holy Ghost whereby He truly works and acts in our hearts."[2]

With the help of this queer, misty doctrine which, as we may notice, makes of preaching a sort of Sacrament working "*ex opere operato*," Luther's followers attempted to construct a system out of their master's varying and often so arbitrary statements. At any rate they upheld his denial of any natural order of morality distinct from the order of grace. It was to remain true that man, "previous to conversion, possesses indeed an understanding, but not of divine things, and a will, though not for anything good and wholesome." In this respect man stands far below even a stock or stone, because he resists the Word and Will of God (which they cannot do) until God raises him up from the death of sin, enlightens and creates him anew.[3]

Nevertheless several theses, undoubtedly Luther's own, are here glossed over or quietly bettered. If, for instance, according to Luther everything takes place of absolute necessity (a fact to which the Formula of Concord draws attention), if man, even in the natural acts of the mind, is bound by what is fore-ordained,[4] then even the listening to a sermon and the dwelling on it cannot be matters of real freedom. Moreover the man troubled with fears on predestination, is comforted by the well-known Bible texts, which teach that it is the Will of God that all should be saved; whilst nothing is said of Luther's doctrine that it is only the revealed God who speaks thus, whereas the hidden God acts quite otherwise, plans and carries out the very opposite, "damns even those who have not deserved it—and, yet, does not thereby become unjust."[5] Reference is made to Adam's Fall, whereby nature has been depraved; but nothing is said of Luther's view that Adam himself simply could not avoid falling because God did not then "bestow on him the spirit of obedience."[6] But, though these things are passed over in silence, due prominence is given to those ideas of Luther's of which the result is the destruction of all moral order, natural as well as

[1] "Symb. Bücher," *ib.*, p. 601. [2] *Ib.*
[3] *Ib.*, p. 602. [4] Cp. vol. ii., pp. 232, 265 f., 290.
[5] Quoted from Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 758. On the statement "without on that account being unjust" see vol. i., p. 187 ff., vol. ii, p. 268 f.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 675; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 207. Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 757.

supernatural. According to the Formula of Concord the natural order was shattered by Adam's Fall; as for the supernatural order it is replaced by the alien, mechanical order of imputation.

Christianity merely Inward. The Church Sundered from the World

Among the things which Luther did to the detriment of the moral principle must be numbered his merciless tearing asunder of spiritual and temporal, of Christian and secular life.

The olden Church sought to permeate the world with the religious spirit. Luther's trend was in a great measure towards making the secular state and its office altogether independent; this, indeed, the more up-to-date sort of ethics is disposed to reckon among his greatest achievements. Luther even went so far as to seek to erect into a regular system this inward, necessary opposition of world and Church. Of this we have a plain example in certain of his instructions to the authorities.[1] Whereas the Church had exhorted people in power to temper with Christianity their administration of civil justice and their use of physical force —urging that the sovereign was a Christian not merely in his private but also in his official capacity,—Luther tells the ruler: The Kingdom of Christ wholly belongs to the order of grace, but the kingdom of the world and worldly life belong to the order of the Law; the two kingdoms are of a different species and belong to different worlds. To the one you belong as a Christian, to the other as a man and a ruler. Christ has nothing to do with the regulations of worldly life, but leaves them to the world; earthly life stands in no need of being outwardly hallowed by the Church.[2] Certain statements to a different effect will be considered elsewhere.

"A great distinction," Luther said in 1523, "must be made between a worldling and a Christian, i.e. between a Christian and a worldly man. For a Christian is neither man nor woman . . . must know nothing and possess nothing in the world. . . . A prince may indeed be a Christian, but he must not rule as a Christian, and when he rules he does so not as a Christian but as a prince. As an individual he is indeed a Christian, but his

[1] Cp. vol. ii., p. 294 ff, and below, xxxv., 2.

[2] The above largely reproduces Luthardt, "Luthers Ethik," [2], p. 81 ff.

office or princedom is no business of his Christianity." This seems to him proved by his mystical theory that a Christian "must not harm or punish anyone or revenge himself, but forgive everyone and endure patiently all injustice or evil that befalls him." The theory, needless to say, is based on his misapprehension of the Evangelical Counsels which he makes into commands.[1] On such principles as these, he concludes, it was impossible for any prince to rule, hence "his being a Christian had nothing to do with land and subjects."[2]

For the same reason he holds that "every man on this earth" comprises two "practically antagonistic personalities," for "each one has at the same time to suffer, and not to suffer, everything."[3] The dualism which Luther here creates is due to his extravagant over-statement of the Christian law. The Counsels of Perfection given by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, with which Luther is here dealing (not to resist evil, not to go to law, etc., Mt. v. 19 ff.), are not an invitation addressed to all Christians, and if higher considerations or some duty stands in the way it would certainly denote no perfection to follow them. Luther's misinterpretation necessarily led him to make a cleavage between Christian life and life in the world.

The dualism, however, in so far as it concerned the authorities had, however, yet another source. For polemical reasons Luther was determined to make an end of the great influence that the olden Church had acquired over public life. Hence he absolves the secular power from all dependence as the latter had itself sought to do even before his time. He refused to see that, in spite of all the abuses which had followed on the Church's interference in politics during the Middle Ages, mankind had gained hugely by the guidance of religion. To swallow up the secular power in the spiritual had never been part of the Church's teaching, nor was it ever the ideal of her enlightened representatives; but, for the morality of the great, for the observance of maxims of justice and for the improvement of the nations the principle that religion must not be separated from the life of the State and from the office of those in authority, but must permeate and spiritualise them was, as history proved, truly vital. Subsequent to Luther's day the tendency to separate the two undoubtedly made unchecked progress. He himself, however, was not consistent in his attitude. On the contrary, he came more and more to desiderate the establishment of the closest possible bond between the civil authorities and religion—provided only that the ruler's faith was the same as Luther's. Nevertheless, generally speaking, the separation he had advocated of secular from spiritual became the rule in the Protestant fold.

[1] See our vol. ii., p. 298 f.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 32, p. 439; Erl. ed., 43, p. 211. Exposition of Mt. v.–vii. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 297 f., and vol. iii., pp. 52 f., 60: A prince, as a Christian, must not even defend himself, since a Christian is dead to the world.

[3] "Werke," *ib.*

"Lutheranism," as Friedrich Paulsen said on the strength of his own observations in regions partly Catholic and partly Protestant, "which is commonly said to have introduced religion into the world and to have reconciled public worship with life and the duties of each one's calling has, as a matter of fact, led to the complete alienation and isolation of the Church from real life; on the contrary, the older Church, despite all her 'over-worldliness,' has contrived to make herself quite at home in the world, and has spun a thousand threads in and around the fabric of its life." He thinks himself justified in stating: "Protestantism is a religion of the individual, Catholicism is the religion of the people; the former seeks seclusion, the latter publicity. In the one even public worship bears a private character and appears as foreign to the world as the pulpit rhetoric of a Lutheran preacher of the old school; the [Protestant] Church stands outside the bustle of the workaday world in a world of her own."[1]

We may pass over the fact, that, Luther, by discarding the so-called Counsels reduced morality to a dead level. In the case of all the faithful he abased it to the standard of the Law, doing away with that generous, voluntary service of God which the Church had ever approved and blessed. We have already shown this elsewhere, more particularly in connection with the status of the Evangelical Counsels and the striving after Christian perfection in the monastic life. According to him there are practically no Counsels for those who wish to pass beyond the letter of the Law; there is but one uniform moral Law, and, on the true Christian, even the so-called Counsels are strictly binding.[2]

Life in the world, however, according to his theory has very different laws; here quite another order obtains, which is, often enough, quite the opposite to what man, as a Christian, recognises in his heart to be the true standard. As a Christian he *must* offer his cheek to the smiter; as a member of the civil order he may not do so, but, on the contrary, must everywhere vindicate his rights. Thus his Christianity, so long as he lives in the world, must perforce be reduced to a matter of inward feeling; it is constantly exposed to the severest tests, or, more accurately, constantly in the need of being explained away. The believer is faced by a twofold order of things, and the regulating of his moral conduct becomes a problem which can never be satisfactorily solved.

[1] "Jugenderinnerungen aus seinem Nachlasse," Jena, 1909, p. 155 f.
[2] Cp. vol. ii., p. 140 ff.; vol. iii., p. 187 ff.; vol. iv., p. 130 f.

"Next to the doctrine of Justification there is hardly any other doctrine which Luther urges so frequently and so diligently as that of the inward character and nature of Christ's kingdom, and the difference thus existing between it and the kingdom of the world, i.e. the domain of our natural life."[1]

Let us listen to Luther's utterances at various periods on the dualism in the moral life of the individual: "The twin kingdoms must be kept wide asunder: the spiritual where sin is punished and forgiven, and the secular where justice is demanded and dealt out. In God's kingdom which He rules according to the Gospel there is no demanding of justice, but all is forgiveness, remission and bestowal, nor is there any anger, or punishment, but nothing save brotherly charity and service."[2]—"No rights, anger, or punishment," this certainly would have befitted the invisible, spiritual Church which Luther had originally planned to set up in place of the visible one.[3]

"Christ's everlasting kingdom . . . is to be an eternal spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men by the preaching of the Gospel and by the Holy Spirit."[4] "For your own part, hold fast to the Gospel and to the Word of Christ so as to be ready to offer the other cheek to the smiter, to give your mantle as well as your coat whenever it is a question of yourself and your cause."[5] It is a strict command, though at utter variance with the civil law, in which your neighbour also is greatly concerned. In so far, therefore, you must resist. "Thus you manage perfectly to satisfy at the same time both the Kingdom of God and that of the world, both the outward and the inward; you suffer evil and injustice and yet at the same time punish evil and injustice; you do not resist evil, and yet at the same time you resist it; for according to the one you look to yourself and to yours, and, according to the other, to your neighbour and to his rights. As regards yourself and yours, you act according to the Gospel and suffer injustice as a true Christian; as regards your neighbour and his rights, you act in accordance with charity and permit no injustice."[6]

If, as is but natural, we ask, how Christ came so strictly to enjoin what was almost impossible, Luther replies that He gave His command only for Christians, and that real Christians were few in number: "In point of fact Christ is speaking only to His dear Christians [when He says, 'that Christians must not go to

[1] Luthardt, "Luthers Ethik," [2], p. 81.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 280 f.

[3] Cp. vol. ii., p. 107 for Luther's earlier idea of the "holy brotherhood of spirits," in which "*omnia sunt indifferentia et libera.*" See also vol. vi., xxxviii., 3.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 1^2, p. 108.

[5] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 11, p. 255; Erl. ed., 22, p. 73. "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," 1523.

[6] *Ib.*

law,' etc.], and it is they alone who take it and carry it out; they make no mere Counsel of it as the Sophists do, but are so transformed by the Spirit that they do evil to no one and are ready willingly to suffer evil from anyone." But the world is full of non-Christians and "them the Word does not concern at all."[1] Worldlings must needs tread a very different way: "All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law." Since they know not the command "Resist not evil," "God has given them another government different from the Christian estate, and the Kingdom of God." There ruleth coercion, severity, and, in a word, the Law, "seeing, that, amongst a thousand, there is barely one true Christian." "If anyone wished to govern the world according to the Gospel . . . dear heart, what would the result be! He would be loosening the leashes and chains of the wild and savage beasts, and turning them astray to bite and tear everybody. . . . Then the wicked would abuse the Christian freedom of the Gospel and work their own knavery."[2]

Luther clung to the very end of his life to this congeries of contradictory theories, which he advocated in 1523, in his passionate aversion to the ancient doctrine of perfection. In 1539 or 1540 he put forth a declaration against the "Sophists" in defence of his theory of the "Counsels," directed more particularly against the Sorbonne, which had insisted that the "*consilia evangelica*," "were they regarded as precepts, would be too heavy a burden for religion."[3] "They make out the Counsels," he says, "i.e. the commandments of God, to be not necessary for eternal life and invite people to take idolatrous, nay, diabolical vows. To lower the Divine precepts to the level of counsels is a horrible, Satanic blasphemy." As a Christian "you must rather forsake and sacrifice everything"; to this the first table of the Law (of Moses, the Law of the love of God) binds you, but, on account of the second table (the law of social life), you may and must preserve your own for the sake of your family. As a Christian, too, you must be willing to suffer at the hands of every man, "but, apart from your Christian profession, you must resist evil if you wish to be a good citizen of this world."[4]

"Hence you see, O Christian brother," he concludes, "how much you owe to the doctrine which has been revived in our day, as against a Pharisaical theology which leaves us nothing even of Moses and the Ten Commandments, and still less of Christ."

"Such honour and glory have I by the grace of God—whether it be to the taste or not of the devil and his brood—that, since the days of the Apostles, no doctor, scribe, theologian or lawyer has confirmed, instructed and comforted the consciences of the secular Estates so well and

[1] *Ib.*, p. 252=70.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 251=68.
[3] "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 451.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 445.

lucidly as I have done by the peculiar grace of God. Of this I am confident. For neither St. Augustine nor St. Ambrose, who are the greatest authorities in this field, are here equal to me. . . . Such fame as this must be and remain known to God and to men even should they go raving mad over it."[1]

It is true that his theories contain many an element of good and, had he not been able to appeal to this, he could never have spoken so feelingly on the subject.

The good which lies buried in his teaching had, however, always received its due in Catholicism. Luther, when contrasting the Church's alleged aversion for secular life with his own exaltation of the dignity of the worldly calling, frequently speaks in language both powerful and fine of the worldly office which God has assigned to each one, not only to the prince but even to the humble workman and tiller of the field, and of the noble moral tasks which thus devolve on the Christian. Yet any aversion to the world as he conceives it had never been a principle within the Church, though individual writers may indeed have erred in this direction. The assertion that the olden Church, owing to her teaching concerning the state of perfection and the Counsels, had not made sufficient allowance for the dignity of the secular calling, has already been fully dealt with.

It is true that Luther, to the admiration of his followers, confronted the old Orders founded by the Church with three new Orders, all Divinely instituted, viz. the home, the State and the Church.[2] But, so far from "notably improving" on the "scholastic ethics" of the past, he did not even contrive to couch his thoughts on these "Orders" in language as lucid as that used long before his day by the theologians and moralists of the Church in voicing the same idea; what he says of these "Orders" also falls short of the past on the score of wealth and variety.[3] Nevertheless the popular ways he had of depicting things as he fain would see them, proved alluring, and this gift of appealing to the people's fancy and of charming them by the contrast of new and old, helped to build up the esteem in which he has

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 236. Verantwortung der auffgelegten Auffrur, 1533. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 294, and vol. iv., p. 331.

[2] Luthardt, "Luthers Ethik," [2], pp. 93–96.

[3] Cp. vol. iv., p. 127 ff., on the high esteem of worldly callings in the period previous to Luther's. Cp. N. Paulus, "Die Wertung der weltlichen Berufe im MA." ("Hist. Jahrb.," 1911, p. 725 ff.).

been held ever since ; his inclination, moreover, to promote the independence of the individual in the three " Orders," and to deliver him from all hierarchical influence must from the outset have won him many friends.

Divorce of Religion and Morals

Glancing back at what has already been said concerning Luther's abasement of morality and considering it in the light of his theories of the Law and Gospel, of assurance of salvation and morality, we find as a main characteristic of Luther's ethics a far-reaching, dangerous rift between religion and morals. Morality no longer stands in its old position at the side of faith.

Faith and the religion which springs from it are by nature closely and intimately bound up with morality. This is shown by the history of heathenism in general, of modern unbelief in particular. Heathenism or unbelief in national life always signifies a moral decline ; even in private life morality reacts on the life of faith and the religious feeling, and *vice versa*. The harmony between religion and morality arises from the fact that the love of God proceeds from faith in His dominion and Fatherly kindness.

Luther, in spite of his assurances concerning the stimulus of the life of faith and of love, severed the connection between faith and morality and placed the latter far below the former. His statements concerning faith working by love, had they been more than mere words, would, in themselves, have led him back to the very standpoint of the Church he hated. In reality he regards the " Law " as something utterly hostile to the " pious " soul ; before the true " believer " the Law shrinks back, though, to the man not yet justified by " faith," it serves as a taskmaster and a hangman. The " Law " thus loses the heavenly virtue with which it was stamped. In Luther's eyes the only thing of any real value is that religion which consists in faith in the forgiveness of sins.

" This," he says, " is the '*Summa Summarum* of a truly Christian life, to know that in Christ you have a Gracious God ready to forgive you your sins and never to think of them again, and that you are now a child of everlasting happiness, reigning with Christ over heaven and earth."

It is true he hastens to add, that, from this saving faith, works of morality would "assuredly" flow.[1]

"Assuredly"? Since Albert Ritschl it has been repeated countless times that Luther did no more than "assert that faith by its very nature is productive of good works." As a matter of fact "he is wont to speak in much too uncertain a way of the good works which follow faith"; with him "faith" is the whole man, whereas the Bible says: "Fear God *and* keep His commandments [i.e. religion *plus* morality]; this is the whole man."[2]

Luther's one-sided insistence on a confiding, trusting faith in God, at the cost of the moral work, has its root in his theory of the utter depravity of man and his entire lack of freedom, in his low esteem for the presuppositions of morality, in his conviction that nature is capable of nothing, and, owing to its want of self-determination, is unable on its own even to be moral at all. If we desire, so he says frankly, to honour God's sublime majesty and to humble fallen creatures as they deserve, then let us recognise that God works all in all without any possibility of any resistance whatsoever on man's part, God's action being like to that of the potter on his clay. Just as Luther was unable to recognise justification in the sense in which it had been taught of yore, so also he entirely failed to appreciate the profounder conception of morality.

His strictures on morality—which had ever been esteemed as the voluntary keeping of the Law by man, who by a generous obedience renders to God the freedom received—point plainly to the cause of his upheaval of the whole field of dogma. At the outset he had set himself to oppose self-righteousness, but in doing so he dealt a blow at righteousness itself; he had attacked justice by works, but justice itself had suffered; he declared war on the wholly imaginary phantom of a self-chosen morality based on man-made ordinances and thereby degraded morality, if he did not indeed undermine its very foundations.

What Möhler says of the reformers and their tendency to set aside the commands of morality applies in particular to Luther and his passionate campaign. It is true he writes, that "the moral freedom they had destroyed came to involve the existence of a freedom from that moral law which concerns only the seen, bounded world of time, but fails to apply in the eternal world, set high above all time and space. This does not mean, however,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 42 f.

[2] Cp. W. Walther, "Die christliche Sittlichkeit nach Luther," 1909, p. 50, where Ritschl's opinion is disputed. The above complaint of Luther's "uncertain way" is from Ritschl, who was not the first to make it; the Bible objection is also much older. It matters nothing that in addition to the faith usually extolled as the source of works, Luther also mentions the Holy Ghost (see passages in Walther, p. 46 f.) and once even speaks of the new feeling as though it were a gift of the Spirit dwelling in His very substance in the believer. ("Opp. lat. exeg.." 19, p. 109 *sq.*) These are reminiscences of his Catholic days and have in reality nothing to do with his doctrine of Imputation.

that the reformers were conscious of what lay at the base of their system ; on the contrary, had they seen it, had they perceived whither their doctrines were necessarily leading, they would have rejected them as quite unchristian."[1]

The following reflection of the famous author of "Catholic Symbolism" may also be set on record, the better to safeguard against misapprehension anything that may have been said, particularly as it touches upon a matter to which we repeatedly have had occasion to allude.

"No one can fail to see the religious element in Protestantism," he says, "who calls to mind the idea of Divine Providence held by Luther and Melanchthon when they started the work of the Reformation. . . . All the phenomena of this world [according to it] are God's own particular work and man is merely His instrument. Everything in the history of the world is God's invisible doing which man's agency merely makes visible. Who can fail to see in this a truly religious outlook on all things ? All is referred back to God, Who is all in all. . . . In the same way the Redeemer also is all in all in the sense that He and His Spirit are alone active, and faith and regeneration are solely due to Him."[2]

Möhler here relates how, according to Luther, Staupitz had said of the new teaching at its inception, "What most consoles me is that it has again been brought to light how all honour and praise belong to God alone, but, to man, nothing at all." This statement is quite in keeping with the vague, mystical world of thought in which Staupitz, who was no master of theology or philosophy, lived. But it also reflects the impression of many of Luther's contemporaries who, unaware of his misrepresentation of the subject, were attracted by the advantage to religion and morality which seemed to accrue from Luther's effort to ascribe all things solely to God.

Where this tendency to subordinate all to God and to exalt the merits of Christ finds more chastened expression in Luther's writings, when, in his hearty, homely fashion, he paints the love of the Master or His virtues as the pattern of all morality, or pictures in his own peculiar realistic style the conditions of everyday life the better to lash abuses, then the reader is able to appreciate the better side of his ethics and the truly classic example he sometimes sets of moral exhortations. It would surely be inexplicable how so many earnest Protestant souls, from his day to our own, should have found and still find a stimulus in his practical works, for instance, in his Postils, did these works not really contain a substratum of truth, food for thought and a

[1] "Symbolik," § 25. [2] *Ib.*, § 26.

certain gift of inspiration. Even the man who studies the long list of Luther's practical writings simply from the standpoint of the scholar and historian—though he may not always share Luther's opinions—cannot fail to acknowledge that the warmth with which Luther speaks of those Christian truths accepted by all, leaves a deep impression and re-echoes within the soul like a voice from our common home.

On the one hand Luther rightly retained many profoundly religious elements of the mediæval theology, indeed, owing to his curious way of looking at things, he actually outdid in mediævalism the Middle Ages themselves, for he merged all human freedom in the Divine action, a thing those Ages had not dared to do.

And yet, on the other hand, to conclude our survey of his "abasement of practical Christianity," he is so ultra-modern on a capital point of his ethics as to merit being styled the precursor of modern subjectivism as applied to morals. For all his new ethical precepts and rules, beyond the Decalogue and the Natural Law, are devoid of objective obligation; they lack the sanction which alone would have rendered them capable of guiding the human conscience.

The Lack of Obligation and Sanction

Luther's moral instructions differed in one weighty particular from those of the olden Church.

As he himself insists at needless length, they were a collection of personal opinions and exhortations which appeared to him to be based on Holy Scripture or the Law of Nature—and in many instances, though not always, actually did rest on this foundation. When he issued new pronouncements of a practical character, for instance, concerning clandestine espousals, or annulled the olden order of public worship, the sacraments, or the Commandments of the Church, he was wont to say, that, it was his intention merely to advise consciences and to arouse the Evangelical consciousness. He took this line partly because he was conscious of having no personal authority, partly because he wished to act according to the principles proclaimed in his "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen," or, again, in order to prevent the rise of dissent and the

resistance he always dreaded to any attempt to lay down categorical injunctions. Thus his ethical regulations, so far as they differed from the olden ones, amounted merely to so many invitations to act according to the standard set up, whereas the character of the ethical legislation of Catholicism is essentially binding. Having destroyed the outward authority of the Church, he had nothing more to count upon than the "ministry of the Word," and everything now depended on the minister's being able to convince the believer, now freed from the ancient trammels.

He himself, for instance, once declared that he would "assume no authority or right to coerce, for I neither have nor desire any such. Let him rule who will or must; I shall instruct and console consciences as far as I am able. Who can or wants to obey, let him do so; who won't or can't, let him leave it alone."[1]

He would act "by way of counsel," so he teaches, "as in conscience he would wish to serve good friends, and whoever likes to follow his advice must do so at his own risk."[2] "He gives advice agreeably to his own conscience," writes Luthardt in "Luthers Ethik," "leaving it to others to accept his advice or not on their own responsibility."[3]

Nor can one well argue that the requisite sanction for the new moral rules was the general sanction found in the Scriptural threats of Divine chastisements to overtake transgressors. The question is whether the Law laid down in the Bible or written in man's heart is really identical with Luther's. Those who were unable of themselves to prove that this was the case were ultimately (so Luther implies) to believe it on his authority and conform themselves to his "Evangelical consciousness"; thus, for instance, in the matter of religious vows, held by Luther to be utterly detestable, and by the Church to be both permissible and praiseworthy.

In but few points does the purely subjective character of the new religion and morality advocated by Luther stand out so clearly as in this absence of any objective sanction or higher authority for his new ethics. Christianity hitherto had appealed to the divine, unchangeable dignity of the Church, which, by her infallible teaching, her discipline and power to punish, insured the observance of law and order in the religious domain. But, now, according to the new teaching, man—who so sadly needs a clear and definite lead for his moral life—besides the Decalogue, "clear" Bible

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 206; Erl. ed., 23, p. 95.
[2] *Ib.* [3] p. 111.

text and Natural Law, is left with nothing but "recommendations" devoid of any binding force; views are dinned into his ears the carrying out of which is left solely to his feelings, or, as Luther says, to his "conscience."

Deprived of the quieting guidance of an authority which proclaims moral obligations and sees that they are carried out, conscience and personality tend in his system to assume quite a new rôle.

6. The part played by Conscience and Personality. Luther's warfare with his old friend Caspar Schwenckfeld

Protestants have confidently opined, that "Luther mastered anew the personal foundation of morality by reinstating conscience in its rights"; by insisting on feeling he came to restore to "personality the dignity" which in previous ages it had lost under the ban of a "legalism" devoid of "morality."

To counter such views it may be of use to give some account of the way in which Luther taught conscience to exercise her rights. The part he assigns to the voice within which judges of good and evil, scarcely bears out the contention that he really strengthened the "foundation of morality." The vague idea of "personality" may for the while be identified with conscience, especially as in the present connection "person" stands for the medium of conscience.[1]

On Conscience and its Exercise in General

To quiet the conscience, to find some inward support for one's actions in the exercise of one's own will, this is what Luther constantly insists on in the moral instructions he gives, at the same time pointing to his own example.[2] What

[1] Owing to his assertion of man's unfreedom and passivity, Luther found it very difficult to retain the true meaning of conscience. So long as he thought in any way as a Catholic he recognised the inner voice, the "synteresis," that urges us to what is good and reproves what is evil, leaving man freedom of choice; this we see from his first Commentary on the Psalms, above, vol. i., p. 76 f. But already in his Commentary on Romans he characterised the "synteresis," and the assumption of any freedom of choice on man's part, as the loophole through which the old theology had dragged in its errors concerning grace. (Above, vol. i., p. 233 f.)

[2] Cp. W. Walther, "Die christl. Sittlichkeit," p. 31.

was the nature of his own example ? His rebellion against the Church's authority was to him the cause of a long, fierce struggle with himself. He sought to allay the anxiety which stirred his soul to its depths by the reassuring thought, that all doubts were from the devil from whom alone all scruples come ; he sternly bade his soul rest secure and as resolutely refused to hearken to any doubts regarding the truth of his new Evangel. His new and quite subjective doctrines he defended in the most subjective way imaginable and, to those of his friends whose consciences were troubled, he recommends a similar course of action ; he even on several occasions told people thus disturbed in mind whom he wished to reassure, that they must listen to his, Luther's, voice as though it were the voice of God. This was his express advice to his pupil Schlaginhaufen[1] and, in later days, to his friend Spalatin, who also had become a prey to melancholy."[2] He himself claimed to have been delivered from his terrors by having simply acccpted as a God-sent message the encouraging words of Bugenhagen.[3]

"Conscience is death's own cruel hangman," so he told Spalatin ; from Ambrose and Augustine the latter should learn to place all his trust not in conscience but in Christ.[4] It scarcely needs stating that here he is misapplying the fine sayings of both these Fathers. They would have repudiated with indignation the words of consolation which not long after he offered the man suffering from remorse of conscience, assuring him that he was as yet a novice in struggling against conscience, and had hitherto been "too tender a sinner" ; "join yourself to us real, big, tough sinners, that you may not belittle and put down Christ, Who is the Saviour, not of small, imaginary sinners, but of great and real ones" ; thus it was that he, Luther, had once been consoled in his sadness by Staupitz.[5] Here he is applying wrongly a perfectly correct thought of his former Superior. Not perhaps quite false, but at any rate thoroughly Lutheran, is the accompanying assurance : "I stand firm [in my conscience] and maintain my attitude, that you may lean on me in your struggle against Satan and be supported by me."

[1] Above, vol. iv., p. 227. "You are to believe without doubting what God Himself has spoken to you, for I have God's authority and commission to speak to and to comfort you."

[2] Letter of Aug. 21, 1544, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 680 : "Believe me, Christ speaks through me."

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 220 : "*persuasi mihi, esse de coelo vocem Dei.*"

[4] Letter of March 8, 1544, "Briefe," *ib.*, p. 636.

[5] In the letter quoted in n. 2, *ib.*, p. 679 f.

Thus does he direct Spalatin, who was tormented by remorse, to comfort himself *against* his conscience."[1]

"To comfort oneself against one's conscience," such is the task which Luther, in many of his writings, proposes to the believer. Indeed, in his eyes the chief thing of all is to "get the better of sin, death, hell and our own conscience"; in spite of the opposition of reason to Luther's view of Christ's satisfaction, we must learn, "through Him [Christ] to possess nothing but grace and forgiveness," of course, in the sense taught at Wittenberg.[2]

A former brother monk, Link, the apostate Augustinian of Nuremberg, Luther also encourages, like Spalatin the fallen priest, to kick against the prick of conscience: "These are devil's thoughts and not from us, which make us despair," they must be "left to the devil," the latter always "keeps closest to those who are most pious"; to yield to such despairing thoughts "is as bad as giving in and leaving Satan supreme."[3]

When praising the "sole" help and consolation of the grace of Christ he does not omit to point out, directly or otherwise, how, "when in despair of himself," and enduring frightful inward "sufferings" of conscience, he had hacked his way through them all and had reached a firm faith in Christ minus all works, and had thus become a "theologian of the Cross."[4]

Even at the commencement of the struggle, in order to encourage wavering followers, he allowed to each man's conscience the right to defy any confessor who should forbid Luther's writings to such of his parishioners who came to him: "Absolve me at my own risk," they were to say to him, "I shall not give up the books, for then I should be sinning against my conscience." He argues that, according to Rom. xiv. 1, the confessor might not "urge them against their conscience." Was it then enough for a man to have formed himself a conscience, for the precept no longer to hold? His admonition was, however, intended merely as a counsel for "strong and courageous consciences." If the confessor did not prove amenable, they were simply to "go without scruple to the Sacrament," and if this, too, was refused them then they had only to send "Sacrament and Church" about their business.[5] Should the confessor require contrition for sins committed, this, according to another of his statements, was a clear attack on conscience which does not require contrition for absolution, but merely faith in Christ; such a priest ought to have the keys taken out of his hands and be given a pitchfork instead."[6]

[1] *Ib.* [2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 337.

[3] On July 14, 1528, "Briefwechsel," ed. Enders, 6, p. 300 f.

[4] Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 354; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 388. Cp. vol. i., p. 319.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 290 f.; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 209. For fuller quotations see vol. ii., p. 58 f.

[6] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 4, p. 658.

In the above instances the Catholic could find support for his conscience in the infallible authority of the Church. It was this authority which forbade him Luther's writings as heretical, and, in the case of contrition—which Luther also brings forward—it was likewise his religious faith, which, consonantly with man's natural feeling, demanded such sorrow for sin. In earlier days authority and faith were the reliable guides of conscience without which it was impossible to do. Luther left conscience to itself or referred it to his own words and his reading of Scripture, though this again, as he himself acknowledged, was not an absolute rule ; thus he leaves it a prey to a most unhappy uncertainty—unless, indeed, it was able to "find assurance" in the way he wishes.

Quite early in his career he also gave the following instruction to those of the clergy who were living in concubinage on how to form their conscience ; they were "to salve their conscience" and take the female to their "wedded wife," even though this were against the law, fleshly or ghostly. "Your soul's salvation is of more account than any tyrannical laws. . . . Let him who has the faith to take the risk follow me boldly." "I will not deceive him," he adds apologetically, but at least he had "the power to advise him regarding his sins and dangers" ; he will show them how they may do what they are doing, "but with a good conscience."[1] For as Luther points out in another passage, even though their discarding of their supposed obligation of celibacy had taken place with a bad conscience, still the Bible-texts subsequently brought forward, read according to the interpretation of the new Evangelist, avail to heal their conscience.[2] At any rate, so he tells the Teutonic Knights when inviting them to break their vow of chastity : "on the Word of God we will risk it and do it in the teeth of and contrary to all Councils and Churches ! Close eyes and ears and take God's Word to heart."[3] Better, he cries, go on keeping two or three prostitutes than seek of a Council permission to marry![4]

These were matters for "those to risk who have the faith," so we have heard him say. In reality all did depend on people's faith . . . in Luther, on their conviction that his doctrine and his moral system were right.

But what voice was to decide in the case of those who were wavering ?

On the profoundest questions of moral teaching, it is, ac-

[1] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 21, p. 324. [2] *Ib.*, 28, p. 224.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 237 ; Erl. ed., 29, p. 25.
[4] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 29, p. 23 ; cp. above, vol. iii., p. 262 ff.

cording to Luther, the "inward judgment" that is to decide what "spirit" must be followed. "For every Christian," he writes, "is enlightened in heart and conscience by the Holy Ghost and by God's Grace in such a way as to be able to judge and decide with the utmost certainty on all doctrines." It is to this that the Apostle refers when he says: "A spiritual man judges all things" (1 Cor. iii. 15). Beyond this, moreover, Scripture constitutes an "outward judgment" whereby the Spirit is able to convince men, it being a "ghostly light, much brighter than the sun."[1] It is highly important "to be certain" of the meaning of the Bible,[2] though here Luther's own interpretation was, needless to say, to hold the field. The preachers instructed by him were to say: "I know that the doctrine is right in God's sight" and "boast" of the inward certainty they shared with him.[3]

Luther's rules for the guidance of conscience in other matters were quite similar. Subjectivism becomes a regular system for the guidance of conscience. In this sense it was to the person that the final decision was left. But whether this isolation of man from man, this snatching of the individual from dutiful submission to an authority holding God's place, was really a gain to the individual, to religion and to society, or not rather the reverse, is only to be settled in the light of the history of private judgment which was the outcome of Luther's new principle.

Of himself Luther repeats again and again, that his knowledge and conscience alone sufficed to prove the truth of his position;[4] that he had won this assurance at the cost of his struggles with conscience and the devil. Ulenberg, the old writer, speaking of these utterances in his "Life of Luther,"[5] says that his hero mastered his conscience when at the Wartburg, and, from that time, believed more firmly than ever that he had gained this assurance by a Divine revelation ("*cœlesti quadam revelatione*"), for which reason he had then written to his Elector that he had received his lead solely from heaven.[6]

In matters of conscience wherever the troublesome "Law"

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 653; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 176 *sq.*
[2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 58, pp. 394–398.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 17, 1, p. 232; Erl. ed., 39, p. 111. Should a preacher be unable thus to "boast," he is to "hold his tongue," so we read there.
[4] See, e.g., vol. iii., pp. 110 ff.–158 f.
[5] "Vita Lutheri," Coloniæ, 1622, p. 141.
[6] Above, vol. iii., p. 111.

comes in we can always trace the devil's influence; we "must come to grips with him and fight him,"[1] only the man who has been through the mill, as he himself had, could boast of having any certainty: "The devil is a juggler. Unless God helps us, our work and counsel is of no account; whether we turn right or left he remains the Prince of this world. Let him who does not know this just try. I have had some experience of this. But let no one believe me until he too has experienced it."[2]

Not merely in the case of his life-work in general, but even in individual matters of importance, the inward struggles and "agonies" through which he had passed were signs by which to recognise that he was in the right. Thus, for instance, referring to his hostile action in Agricola's case, Luther says: "Oh, how many pangs and agonies did I endure about this business. I almost died of anxiety before I brought these propositions out into the light of day."[3] Hence it was plain, he argued, how far he was from the palpable arrogance displayed by his Antinomian foe, and how evidently his present conduct was willed by God.

The Help of Conscience at Critical Junctures

It was the part played by subjectivism in Luther's ethics that led him in certain circumstances to extend suspiciously the rights of "conscience."

In the matter of the bigamy of Philip of Hesse he soothed the Elector of Saxony by telling him he must ignore the general outcry, since the Landgrave had acted "from his need of conscience"; in his "conscience" the Prince regarded his "wedded concubine" as "no mere prostitute." "By God's Grace I am well able to distinguish between what by way of grace and before God may be permitted in the case of a troubled conscience and what, apart from such need of conscience, is not right before God in outward matters."[4] In his extreme embarrassment, consequent on this matrimonial tangle, Luther deemed it necessary to make so hair-splitting a distinction between lawfulness and permissibility when need of conscience required it. The explanation—that, in such cases, something must be conceded "before God and by way of grace"—which he offers together with the Old-Testament texts as justifying the bigamy, must look like a fatal concession to laxity.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 69 f.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 19.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 70=20. [3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 22.
[4] On July 24, 1540, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 274. Above, vol. iv., p. 13 ff.

He also appealed to conscience in another marriage question where he made the lawfulness of bigamy depend entirely on the conscience.

A man, who, owing to his wife's illness was prevented from matrimonial intercourse, wished, on the strength of Carlstadt's advice, to take a second wife. Luther thereupon wrote to Chancellor Brück, on Jan. 27, 1524, telling him the Prince should reply as follows : " The husband must be sure and convinced in his own conscience by means of the Word of God that it is lawful in his case. Therefore let him seek out such men as may convince him by the Word of God, whether Carlstadt [who was then in disgrace at Court], or some other, matters not at all to the Prince. For if the fellow is not sure of his case, then the permission of the Prince will not make him so ; nor is it for the Prince to decide on this point, for it is the priests' business to expound the Word of God, and, as Zacharias says, from their lips the Law of the Lord must be learned. I, for my part, admit I can raise no objection if a man wishes to take several wives since Holy Scripture does not forbid this ; but I should not like to see this example introduced amongst Christians. . . . It does not beseem Christians to seize greedily and for their own advantage on everything to which their freedom gives them a right. . . . No Christian surely is so God-forsaken as not to be able to practise continence when his partner, owing to the Divine dispensation, proves unfit for matrimony. Still, we may well let things take their course."[1]

On the occasion of his own marriage with Bora we may remember how he had declared with that defiance of which he was a past master, that he would take the step the better to withstand the devil and all his foes. (Vol. ii., p. 175 ff.)

A curious echo of the way in which he could set conscience at defiance is to be met with in his instructions to his assistant Justus Jonas, who, as soon as his first wife was dead, cast about for a second. Luther at first was aghast, owing to Biblical scruples, at the scandal which second marriages on the part of the regents of the Church would give and entreated him at least to wait a while. When he found it impossible to dissuade Jonas, he warned him of the " malicious gossip of our foes," " who are ever eager to make capital out of our example " ; nevertheless, he goes on to say that he had nothing else to urge against another union, so long as Jonas " felt within himself that spirit of defiance which would enable him, after the step, to ignore all the outcry and the hate of all the devils and of men, and not to attempt, nay, to scorn any effort to stop the mouths of men, or to crave their favour."[2]

[1] To Chancellor Brück, " Briefwechsel," 4, p. 282 : " *Oportere ipsum maritum sua propria conscientia esse firmum ac certum per verbum Dei, sibi hæc licere.*" Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 259 f.

[2] Letter to Jonas, May 4, 1543, " Briefe," 5, p. 556.

The "spirit of defiance" which he here requires as a condition for the step becomes elsewhere a sort of mystical inspiration which may justify an action of doubtful morality.

Granted the presence of this inspiration he regards as permissible what otherwise would not be so. In a note sent to the Elector of Saxony at the time of the Diet of Augsburg regarding the question whether it was allowed to offer armed resistance to the Emperor, we find this idea expressed in remarkable words. Till then Luther had looked upon resistance as forbidden. The predicament of his cause, now endangered by the warlike threats of the Emperor, led him to think of resistance. He writes: If the Elector wishes to take up arms "he must do so under the influence of a singular spirit and faith (*'vocante aliquo singulari spiritu et fide'*). Otherwise he must yield to superior force and suffer death together with the other Christians of his faith."[1] It is plain that there would have been but little difficulty in finding the peculiar mystical inspiration required; no less plain is it, that, once this back door had been opened "inspiration" would soon usurp the place of conscience and justify steps, that, in themselves, were of a questionable character.

Conscience in the Religious Question of the Day

The new method of dealing with conscience is more closely connected with Luther's new method of inducing faith than might at first sight appear.

The individualism he proclaimed in matters of faith embodied the principle, that "each one must, in his own way, lay hold on religious experience and thus attain religious conviction."[2] Luther often says, in his idealistic way, that only thus is it possible to arrive at the supreme goal, viz. to feel one's faith within as a kind of inspiration; our aim must ever be to feel it "surely and immutably" in our conscience and in all the powers of our soul.[3]

[1] Text in G. Berbig ("Quellen und Darstellungen aus der Gesch. des Reformationszeitalters," Leipzig, 1908), p. 277 (cp. Enders, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 76 f.). This statement completes what was said in vol. iii., p. 55.

[2] Karl Stange, "Die ältesten ethischen Disputationen Luthers," 1904, p. vii.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 23; Erl. ed., 28, p. 298.—"He ventured, relying on Christ," says Adolf Harnack ("DG.," 3^4, p. 824), "to lay hold on God Himself, and, by this exercise of his faith, in which he saw God's work, his whole being gained in independence and firmness, and he acquired such confidence and joy as no man in the Middle Ages had ever known." Of Luther's struggles of conscience, to be examined more closely in ch. xxxii., Harnack says nothing. On the other hand, however, he quotes, on p. 825, n. 1, the following words of Luther's: "Such a faith alone makes a Christian which risks all on God whether in life or death."

Everything must depend on this experience, the more so as to him faith means something very different from what it means to Catholics ; it is, he says, " no taking it all for true " ; " for that would not be Christian faith but more an opinion than faith " ; on the contrary, each one must believe that "he is one of those on whom such grace and mercy is bestowed."[1] Now, such a faith, no matter how profound and immutable the feeling be, cannot be reached except at the cost of a certain violence to conscience ; such coercion is, in fact, essential owing to the nature of this faith in personal salvation.

What, according to Luther, is the general character of faith ? Fear and struggles, so he teaches, are not merely its usual accompaniments, but are also the " sure sign that the Word has touched and moved you, that it exercises, urges and compels you " ; nay, Confession and Communion are really meant only for such troubled ones, " otherwise there would be no need of them "—i.e. they would not be necessary unless there existed despair of conscience and anxiety concerning faith. It was a mistaken practice, he continues, for many to refrain from receiving the Sacrament, " preferring to wait until they feel the faith within their heart " ; in this way all desire to receive is extinguished ; people should rather approach even when they feel not at all their faith ; then " you will feel more and more attracted towards it "[2]—though this again, according to Luther, is by no means quite certain.

The " inward experience of faith " too often becomes simply the dictate of one's whim. But a whim and order to oneself to think this or that does not constitute faith as the word is used in revelation, nor does a command imposed on the inward sense of right and wrong amount to a pronouncement of conscience.

Though Luther often held up himself and his temptations regarding faith, as an example which might comfort waverers, Protestants have nevertheless praised him for the supposed firmness of his faith and for his joy of conscience. But was not his " defiant faith " really identical with that imposition he was wont to practise on his conscience and to dignify by the name of inspiration ?

Yet, in spite of all, he never found a secure foundation. " I know what it costs me, for I have daily to struggle with myself," he told his friends in 1538.[3] " I was scarcely able to bring myself to believe," he said in a sermon of the same year, " that the doctrine of the Pope and the Fathers was all wrong."[4] His faith was as insecurely fixed, so he quaintly bewailed on another occasion, " as the fur trimming on his sleeve."[5] " Who believes

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 253 f.

[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 248 f.

[3] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch " : " *in quotidiana versor lucta.*" On Feb. 26.

[4] " Luthers ungedruckte Predigten," ed. G. Buchwald, Leipzig, 1885, 3, p. 245. Sermon of March 16, 1538.

[5] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 56.

such things ? " he asks, wildly implicating all people in general, at the conclusion of a note jotted down in a Bible and alluding to the hope of life everlasting.[1] In 1529 he repeatedly describes to his friends how Satan tempts him (" *Satanas fatigat* ") with lack of faith and despair, how he was sunk in unspeakable " bitterness of soul," and, how, for this reason as he once says, he was scarce able " with a trembling hand " to write to them.[2]

Calvin, too, was aware of the frequent terrors Luther endured. When Pighius, the Catholic writer, alleged Luther's struggles of conscience and temptations concerning the faith as disproving his authority, Calvin took good care not to deny them. He boldly replied that this only redounded to Luther's honour since it was the experience of all devout people, and particularly of the most famous divines.[3]

Was it possible, according to Luther, to be conscientiously opposed to his teaching on faith and morals ? At least in theory, he does go so far in certain statements as to recognise the possibility of such conscientious scruples. In these utterances he would even appear to surrender the whole weight and authority of his theological and ethical discoveries, fundamental though they were to his innovations. " I have served the Church zealously with what God has given me and what I owe to Him. Whoever does not care for it, let him read or listen to others. It matters but little should they feel no need of me."[4] With regard to public worship, it is left " to each one to make up his conscience as to how he shall use his freedom." " I am not your preacher," so he wrote to the " Strasburg Christians," who were inclined to distrust his exclusiveness ; " no one is bound to believe me ; let each man look to himself " ;[5] all are to be referred " from Luther," " to Christ."[6]

Such statements, however, cannot stand against his constant insistence on his Divine mission ; they are rather

[1] " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6. p. 411.

[2] To Amsdorf, Oct. 18 (?), 1529, " Briefwechsel," 7, p. 173.

[3] Cp. A. Zahn, " Calvins Urteile über Luther " (" Theol. Stud. aus Württemberg," 4, 1883), p. 187. Pighius had written against Luther in 1543 on the servitude of the will. Cp., *ib.*, p. 193, Calvin's remark against Gabriel de Saconay.

[4] The words can be better understood when we bear in mind that they occur in the dedication to Duke Johann of Saxony, of his " Sermon von den guten Wercken " (March 29, 1520). " Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 203 ; Erl. ed., 16^2. p. 122 f.

[5] " Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 273 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 83). Here also we must remember that he is speaking to preachers, some of whom differed from him.

[6] *Ib.*, 53, p. 276.

of psychological interest as showing how suddenly he passes from one idea to another. Moreover, his statement last mentioned, often instanced by Protestants as testifying to his breadth of mind, is nullified almost on the same page by the solemn assurance, that, his "Gospel is the true Gospel" and that everything that contradicts it is "heresy," for, indeed, as had been foretold by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi. 19), "heresies" must needs arise.[1]

And, in point of fact, those teachers who felt themselves bound in conscience to differ from him and go their own way —for instance, the "Sacramentarians" in their interpretation of the words of consecration—were made to smart. Of this the example of Schwenckfeld was a new and striking proof.

The contradiction presented on the one hand by Luther's disposition to grant the most absolute freedom of conscience, and on the other by his rigid exclusiveness, is aptly described by Friedrich Paulsen: "In the region of morals Luther leaves the decision to the individual conscience as instructed by the Word of God. To rely on human authority in questions of morals appeared to him not much better than blasphemy. . . . True enough, however, this very Luther, at a later date, attacked those whose conscience found in God's Word doctrines at all different from those taught at Wittenberg."[2]

Hence, neither to the heretics in his own camp nor to the adherents of the olden faith would he allow the right of private judgment, so greatly extolled both by himself and his followers. Nothing had been dearer to the people of mediæval times, who for all their love of freedom were faithful children of the Church, than regard and esteem for the rights of personality in its own domain. Personality, denoting man's unfettered and reasonable nature stamped with its own peculiar individuality, is assuredly something noble. The Catholic Church, far from setting limits to the development of personality, promoted both its real freedom and the growth of individuality in ways suited to man's nature and his supernatural vocation. Even the monastic life, so odious to Luther, was anything but "hostile to the ideal of personality." An impartial observer, prepared to

[1] *Ib.*, p. 272.
[2] "Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichtes," 1², 1896, p. 174, n.

disregard fortuitous abuses, could have seen even then, that the religious life strives after the fairest fruits of ethical personality, which are fostered by the very sacrifice of self-will: Obedience is but a sacrifice "made in the interests of personality."[1] Mere wilfulness and the spirit of "defiance," ever ready to overstep the bounds set by reason and grace, creates, not a person, but a "superman," whose existence we could well spare; of such a being Luther's behaviour reminds us more than once.

After all we have said it would be superfluous to deal in detail with the opinion expressed above (p. 66) by certain Protestant judges, viz. that Luther reinstated conscience, which had fallen into the toils of "legalism," and set it again on its "true basis," insisting on "feeling" and on real "morality." Nor shall we enquire whether it is seriously implied, that, before Luther's day, people were not aware that the mere "legality" of a deed did not suffice unless first of all morality was recognised as the true guide of conduct.

We may repeat yet once again that Luther was not the first to brand "outward holiness-by-works" in the sphere of morality.[2] Berthold of Ratisbon, whose voice re-echoed through the whole of Germany, summing up the teaching of the mediæval moral theologians, reprobates most sternly any false confidence in outward deeds. No heaping up of external works, no matter how eager, can, according to him, prove of any profit to the soul, not even if the sinner, after unheard-of macerations, goes loaded with chains on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and there lays himself down to die within the very sepulchre of the Lord; all that, so he points out with an eloquence all his own, would be thrown away were there lacking the inward spirit of love and contrition for the sins committed.

The doctrine on contrition of the earlier Catholic theologians and popular writers, which we have already had occasion to review, forms an excellent test when compared with Luther's own, by which to decide the question: Which is the outward and which the inward morality? Their

[1] F. Sawicki, "Kath. Kirche und sittliche Persönlichkeit," Cologne, 1907, pp. 86, 88, and "Das Problem der Persönlichkeit und des Übermenschen," Paderborn, 1909; J. Mausbach, "Die kath. Moral und ihre Gegner,[3]", Cologne, 1911. Part 2, particularly pp. 125 ff., 223 ff.

[2] See vol. iv., p. 118 ff.

doctrine is based both on Scripture and on the traditions of antiquity. Similarly the Catholic teaching on moral self-adaptation to Christ, such as we find it, for instance, in St. Benedict's Prologue to his world-famous Rule, that text-book of the mediæval ascetics, in the models and examples of the Fathers and even in the popular Catholic works of piety so widely read in Luther's day, strikingly confutes the charge, that, by the stress it laid on certain commandments and practices, Catholicism proved it had lost sight of "the existence of a living personal morality" and that it fell to Luther once more to recall to life this ideal. The imitation of Christ in the spirit of love was undoubtedly regarded as the highest aim of morality, and this aim necessarily included "personal morality" in its most real sense, and Luther was not in the least necessity of inaugurating any new ideals of virtue.

Luther's Warfare with his old friend Caspar Schwenckfeld

Caspar Schwenckfeld, a man of noble birth hailing from Ossig near Lüben in Silesia, after having studied at Cologne, Frankfurt-on-the-Oder and perhaps also at Erfurt, was, in 1519, won over by Luther's writings to the religious innovations. Being idealistically inclined, the Wittenberg preaching against formalism in religion and on the need of returning to a truly spiritual understanding of the Bible roused him to enthusiasm. He attempted, with rather more logic than Luther, to put in practice the latter's admonitions concerning the inward life and therefore started a movement, half pietist, half mystic, for bringing together those who had been really awakened.

Schwenckfeld was a man of broad mind, with considerable independence of judgment and of a noble and generous disposition. His good position in the world gave him what many of the other Lutheran leaders lacked, viz. a free hand. His frank criticism did not spare the faults in their preaching. The sight of the sordid elements which attached themselves to Luther strengthened him in his resolve to establish communities—first of all in Silesia—modelled on the very lines roughly sketched by Luther, which should present a picture of the apostolic age of the Church. The Duke of Silesia and many of the nobility were induced to desert

Catholicism, and a wide field was won in Silesia for the new ideals of Wittenberg.

In spite of his high esteem for Luther, Schwenckfeld wrote, in 1523: It is evident "that little improvement can be discerned emerging from the new teaching, and that those who boast of the Evangel lead a bad and scandalous life. . . . This moves us not a little, indeed pierces our heart when we hear of it."[1] To the Duke he dedicated, in 1524, a writing entitled: "An exhortation regarding the misuse of sundry notable Articles of the Evangel, through the wrong understanding of which the common man is led into the freedom of the flesh and into error." The book forms a valuable source of information on the religious state of the people at the time of the rise of Lutheranism. Therein he laments, with deep feeling and with an able pen, that so many Lutherans were being influenced by the most worldly of motives, and that a pernicious tendency towards freedom from social restrictions was rife amongst them.[2]

Though Schwenckfeld was all his life equally averse to the demagogue Anabaptist movement and to Zwinglianism with its rationalistic tendency, yet his fate led him into ways very much like theirs. Together with his associate Valentine Krautwald, a former precentor, he attacked the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, giving, however, a new interpretation of the words of Institution, different from that of Zwingli and Œcolampadius. To the fanaticism of the Anabaptists he approximated by his opposition to any organised Church, to the sacraments as means of grace, and to all that appeared to him to deviate from the spirit of the Apostolic Church.

He besought Luther in a personal interview at Wittenberg, on Dec. 1, 1525, to agree to his doctrine of the Sacrament, explaining to him at the same time its affinity with his supposedly profounder conception of the atonement, the sacraments and the life of Christ as followed in his communities; he also invited him in fiery words to throw over the popular churches in which all the people received the

[1] "A study of the earliest Letters of C. Schwenckfeld," Leipzig, 1907 (vol. i. of the "Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum"), p. 268. Karl Ecke, "Schwenckfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Reformation," Berlin, 1911, p. 58.

[2] Cp. Ecke, *ib.*, p. 59. Ecke (p. viii.) speaks of this writing as a "first-rate source."

Supper and rather to establish congregations of awakened Christians. Luther, though in no unfriendly manner, put him off; throughout the interview he addressed him as "Dear Caspar," but he flatly refused to give any opinion. According to Schwenckfeld's own account he even allowed that his doctrine of the Sacrament was "plausible" . . . if only it could be proved, and, on parting, whispered in his ear: "Keep quiet for a while."[1]

When, however, the Sacramentarian movement began to assume alarming dimensions, and the Swiss started quoting Schwenckfeld in favour of their view of the Sacrament, Luther was exasperated and began to assail his Silesian fellow-worker. His indignation was increased by certain charges against the nobleman which reached him from outside sources. He replied on April 14, 1526, to certain writings sent him by Schwenckfeld and Krautwald by an unconditional refusal to agree, though he did so briefly and with reserve.[2] On Jan. 4, of the same year, referring to Zwingli, Œcolampadius and Schwenckfeld in a writing to the "Christians of Reutlingen" directed against the Sacramentarians he said: "Just behold and comprehend the devil and his coarseness"; in it he had included Schwenckfeld, though without naming him, as a "spirit and head" among the three who were attacking the Sacrament.[3]

From that time onward the Silesian appeared to him one of the most dangerous of heretics. He no longer admitted in his case the rights of conscience and private judgment which Luther claimed so loudly for himself and defended in the case of his friends, and to which Schwenckfeld now appealed. It was nothing to him that on many occasions, and even till his death, Schwenckfeld expressed the highest esteem for Luther and gratitude for his services in opening up a better way of theology.

"Dr. Martin," Schwenckfeld wrote in 1528, "I would most gladly have spared, if only my conscience had allowed it, for I know, praise be to God, what I owe to him."[4]

[1] "Epistolar Schwenckfelds," 2, 2, 1570, p. 94 ff. For full title see Ecke, *ib.*, p. 11. Cp. Th. Kolde, "Zeitschr. für KG.," 13, p. 552 ff. Cp. below, p. 138 f.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 383 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 337).

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 123; Erl. ed., 53, p. 362 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 302).

[4] "Epistolar," *ib.*, p. 645. Ecke, p. 87.

It was his purpose to pursue the paths along which Luther had at first striven to reach a new world. "A new world is being born and the old is dying," so he wrote in 1528.[1] This new world he sought within man, but with the same mistaken enthusiasm with which he taught the new resurrection to life. The Divine powers there at work he fancied were the Holy Ghost, the Word of God and the Blood of the all-powerful Jesus. The latter he wished to reinstate in person as the sole ruler of the Church; in raising up to life and in supporting it, Jesus was ministering personally. According to him Christ's manhood was not the same as a creature's; he deified it to such an extent as to dissolve it, thus laying himself open to the charge of Eutychianism. Regeneration in baptism to him seemed nothing, compared with Christ's raising up of the adult to life.

He would have it that he himself had passed, in 1527, through an overwhelming spiritual experience, the chief crisis of his life, when God, as he says, made him "partaker of the heavenly calling, received him into His favour, and bestowed upon him a good and joyful conscience and knowledge."[2] On his "conscience and knowledge" he insisted from that time with blinded prejudice, and taught his followers, likewise with a joyful conscience to embrace the illumination from on high. He adhered with greater consistency than Luther to the thesis that everyone who has been enlightened has the right to judge of doctrine; no "outward office or preaching" might stand in the way of such a one. To each there comes some upheaval of his earthly destiny; it is then that we receive the infusion of the knowledge of salvation given by the Spirit, and of faith in the presence of Christ the God-man; it is a spiritual revelation which fortifies the conscience by the absolute certainty of salvation and guides a man in the freedom of the Spirit through all the scruples of conscience he meets in his moral life. His system also comprises a theory of practically complete immunity from sin.[3]

No other mind has given such bold expression as Schwenckfeld to the individualism or subjectivism which Luther originally taught; no one has ever attempted to calm consciences and fortify them against the arbitrariness of religious feeling in words more sympathetic and moving.

Carl Ecke,[4] his most recent biographer, who is full of admiration for him, says quite truly of the close connection between Schwenckfeld and the earlier Luther, that the chief leaders of the incipient Protestant Church, estimable men though some of them were, nevertheless misunderstood and repulsed one of the most promising Christians of the Reformation age. When he charged them with want of logic in their reforming efforts they regarded it as the fanaticism of an ignoramus. . . . In Schwenckfeld 16th-century Protestantism nipped in the bud the Christian

[1] Ecke takes these words as his motto on the title-page.

[2] "Epistolar," 1, 1566, p. 200. Cp. on the "experience," Ecke, p. 48 ff.

[3] Ecke, p. 118 f.

[4] See above, p. 79, n. 1.

individualism of the early ages rediscovered by Luther, in which lay the hope of a higher unity."[1]

In 1529, two years after his great interior experience, Schwenckfeld left his home, and, on a hint from the Duke of Silesia, severed his connection with him, being unwilling to expose him to the risk of persecution. Thereafter he led a wandering existence for thirty years; until his seventy-second year he lived with strangers at Strasburg, Esslingen, Augsburg, Spires, Ulm and elsewhere. After 1540, when the Lutheran theologians at Schmalkalden published an admonition against him, his history was more that of a "fugitive" than a mere "wanderer."[2]

Still, he was untiringly active in furthering his cause by means of lectures and circular letters, as well as by an extensive private correspondence. He scattered the seeds of his peculiar doctrines amongst the nobility in particular and their dependents in country parts. Many people of standing either belonged or were well-disposed to his school, as Duke Christopher of Würtemberg wrote in 1564; according to him there were many at Augsburg and Nuremberg, in the Tyrol, in Allgäu, Silesia and one part of the Mark.[3] "The well-known intolerance of the Reformation and of its preachers," remarks the Protestant historian of Schwenckfeld, "could not endure in their body a man who had his own views on the Sacraments and refused for conscience sake to take part in the practices of their Church. . . . He wandered, like a hunted deer, without hearth or home, through the cities and forests of South Germany, pursued by Luther and the preachers."[4] As late as 1558 Melanchthon incited the authorities against him, declaring that "such sophistry as his requires to be severely dealt with by the princes."[5]

Not long after Schwenckfeld departed this life at Ulm in 1561. His numerous following in Silesia migrated, first to Saxony, then to Holland and England, and finally to Pennsylvania, where they still exist to this day.

[1] P. 222.

[2] Thus G. Kawerau in his sketch of Schwenckfeld in Möller's "KG.," 3[3], p. 475.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 478.

[4] Ecke, p. 217.

[5] "Corp. ref.," 9, p. 579: "*Heri Stenckfeldianum librum contra me scriptum accepi. . . . Talis sophistica principum severitate compescenda est.*" To G. Buchholzer, Aug. 5, 1558.

Luther's indignation against Schwenckfeld knew no bounds. In conversation he spoke of him as Swinesfield,[1] and, in his addresses and writings, still more commonly as Stinkfield, a name which was also repeatedly applied by his followers to the man they so disliked.[2]

In his Table-Talk Luther refers to that "rascal Schwenckfeld," who was the instigator of numerous errors and deceives many people with his "honeyed words."[3] He, like the fanatics, so Luther complains, despises "the spoken word," and yet God willed "to deal with and work in us by such means."[4]

In 1540 he told his friends that Schwenckfeld was unworthy of being refuted by him, no less unworthy than Sebastian Frank, another gifted and independent critic of Luther and Lutheranism.[5]

In 1543, when Schwenckfeld attempted to make advances to Luther and sent him a tract together with a letter, Luther sent down to the messenger a card on which he acknowledged the receipt of the book, but declared that "the senseless fool, beset as he is by the devil, understands nothing and does not even know what he is talking about." He had better leave him, Luther, alone and not worry him with his "booklets, which the devil himself discharges through him." In the last lines he invokes a sort of curse on Schwenckfeld, and all "Sacramentarians and Eutychians" of whom it had been said in the Bible (Jer. xxiii. 21): "I did not send prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesy."[6]

When giving vent to his grudge against Schwenckfeld in his Table-Talk shortly after this, he declared: "He is a poor creature, with neither talent nor an enlightened spirit. . . . He bespirts the people with the grand name of Christ. . . . The dreamer has stolen a few phrases from my book, '*De ultimis verbis Davidis*' [of 1543], and with these the poor wretch seeks to make a great show." It was on this occasion that Catherine Bora took exception to a word used by her husband, declaring that it was "too coarse."[7]

In his "Kurtz Bekentnis vom heiligen Sacrament" (1545) Luther again gives vigorous expression to his aversion to the "Fanatics and foes of the Sacrament, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Œcolampadius and 'Stinkfield'"; they were heretics "whom he had warned sufficiently" and who were to be avoided.[8] He had refused to listen to or to answer that

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 337.
[2] Cp. below, and above, p. 82, n. 5; also Ecke, p. 218.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 54.
[4] *Ib.*, 57, p. 51.
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 167.
[6] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 613. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 29. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 335.
[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," *ib.*
[8] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 397.

" slanderer Schwenckfeld " because everything was wasted on him. " This you may well tell those among whom, no doubt, Stinkfield makes my name to stink. I like being abused by such slanderers." If by their attacks upon the Sacrament they call the " Master of the house Beelzebub, how should they not abuse His household ? "[1]

7. Self-Improvement and the Reformation of the Church

Self-betterment, by the leading of a Christian life and, particularly, by striving after Christian perfection, had in Catholic times been inculcated by many writers and even by first-rank theologians. In this field it was usual to take for granted, both in popular manuals and in learned treatises, as the general conviction, that religion teaches people to strive after what is highest, whether in each one's ordinary duties of daily life, or in the ecclesiastical or religious state. The power of the moral teaching was to stand revealed in the struggle after the ideal thus set forth.

Did Luther Found a School of True Christian Life?

Luther, of set purpose, refused to make any attempt to found, in the strict sense of the term, a spiritual school of Christian life or perfection. He ever found it a difficult matter even to give any methodical instructions to this end.

Though he dealt fully and attractively with many details of life, not only in his sermons and commentaries, but also in special writings which still serve as inspirations to practical Christianity, yet he would never consent to draft anything in the shape of a system for reaching virtue, still less for attaining perfection. On one occasion he even deliberately refused his friend Bugenhagen's request that he would sketch out a rule of Christian life, appealing to his well-known thesis that " the true Christian has no need of rules for his conduct, for the spirit of faith guides him to do all that God requires and that brotherly love demands of him."[2]

It may indeed be urged that his failure to bequeath to posterity any regular guide to the spiritual life was due to lack of time, that his active and unremitting struggle with

[1] " Werke," *ib.*, 32, p. 411.

[2] 1520 or beginning of 1521. " Briefwechsel," 3, p. 37. Cp., however, Ender's remark on the authorship.

his opponents left him no leisure, and, in point of fact, it is quite true that his controversy did deprive him of the requisite freedom and peace of mind. It may also be allowed that no one man can do everything and that Luther had not the methodical mind needed for such a task, which, in his case, was rendered doubly hard by his revolution in doctrine. The main ground, however, is that there were too many divergent elements in his moral teaching which it was impossible to harmonize ; so much in it was false and awry that no logical combination of the whole was possible. Hence his readiness to invoke the theory, which really sprung from the very depths of his ethics, viz. that the true Christian has no need of rules because everything he has to do is the natural outcome of faith.

In his "Sermon von den guten Wercken" (1520), he expressed this in a way that could not fail to find a following, though it could hardly be described as in the interests of moral effort. Each one must take as his first rule of conduct, not on any account to bind himself, but to keep himself free from all troublesome laws. The very title of the tract in question, so frequently reprinted during Luther's lifetime, would have led people to expect to find in it his practical views on ethics. Characteristically enough, instead of attempting to define the exact nature and value of moral effort, Luther penned what, in reality, was merely an appendix to his new doctrine on faith. He himself, in his dedication of it to Duke Johann of Saxony, admits this of the first and principal part : "Here I have striven to show how we must exercise and make use of faith in all our good works and consider it as the chiefest of works. If God allows me I shall at some other time deal with faith itself, how we must each day pray and speak it."[1]

As, however, no other of Luther's writings contains so many elements of moral teaching drawn from his theology, some further remarks on it may here be in place, especially as he himself set such store on the sermon, that, while engaged on it, referring evidently to the first part, he wrote to Spalatin, that, in his opinion it "would be the best thing he had yet published."[2] Köstlin felt justified in saying : "The whole sermon may be termed the Reformer's first

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 204 ; Erl. ed., 16,[2] p. 123.
[2] On March 25, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 366.

exposition and vindication of the Evangelical teaching on morals."[1]

Starting from his doctrine that good works are only those which God has commanded, and that the highest is "faith, or trust in God's mercy,"[2] he endeavours to show, agreeably to his usual idea, that from faith the works proceed, and for this reason he lingers over the first four commandments of the Decalogue. He explains the principle that faith knows no idleness. By this faith the believer is inwardly set free from the laws and ceremonies by which men were driven to perform good works. If faith reigned in all, then of such there would no longer be any need. The Christian must perform good works, but he is free to perform works of any kind, no man being bound to one or any work, though he finds no fault with those who bind themselves.[3] "Here we see, that, by faith, every work and thing is lawful to a Christian, though, because the others do not yet believe, he bears with them and performs even what he knows is not really binding."[4] Faith issues in works and all works come back to faith, to strengthen the assurance of salvation.[5]

His explanation of the 3rd Commandment, where he speaks of the ghostly Sabbath of the soul and of the putting to death of the old man, seems like an attempt to lay down some sort of a system of moral injunction, and incidentally recalls the pseudo-mystic phase through which Luther had passed not so long before. Here we get just a glimpse of his theory of human unfreedom and of God's sole action, so far as this was in place in a work intended for the "unschooled laity."[6]

In man, because he is "depraved by sin, all works, all words, all thoughts, in a word his whole life, is wicked and ungodly. If God is to work and live in him all these vices and this wickedness must be stamped out." This he calls "the keeping of the day of rest, when our works cease and God alone acts within us." We must, indeed, "resist our flesh and our sins," yet "our lusts are so many and so diverse, and also at times under the inspiration of the Wicked One so clever, so subtle and so plausible that no man can of his own keep himself in the right way; he must let his hands and feet go, commend himself to the Divine guidance, trusting nothing to his reason. . . . For there is nothing more dangerous in us than our reason and our will. And this is the highest and the first work of God in us, and the best thing we can do, for us to refrain from work, to keep the reason and the will idle, to rest and commend ourselves to God in all things, particularly when they are running smoothly and well." "The

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 291.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 209; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 131.
[3] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 288.
[4] "Werke," *ib.*, p. 214=138.
[5] Much the same in the Exposition of the Ten Commandments (1528), "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 485; Erl. ed., 36, p. 100.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 203; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 122.

spiritual Sabbath is to leave God alone to work in us and not to do anything ourselves with any of our powers."[1] He harks back here to that idea of self-surrender to the sole action of God, under the spell of which he had formerly stood: "The works of our flesh must be put to rest and die, so that in all things we may keep the ghostly Sabbath, leaving our works alone and letting God work in us. . . . Then man no longer guides himself, his lust is stilled and his sadness too; God Himself is now his leader; nothing remains but godly desires, joy and peace together with all other works and virtues."[2]

Though, according to the peculiar mysticism which speaks to the "unschooled laity" out of these pages, all works and virtues spring up of themselves during the Sabbath rest of the soul, still Luther finds it advisable to introduce a chapter on the mortification of the flesh by fasting.

Fasting is to be made use of for the salvation of our own soul, so far but no further, as or than each one judges it necessary for the repression of the "wantonness of the flesh" and for the "putting to death of our lust."[3] We are not to "regard the work in itself." Of corporal penance and mortification, and fasting in particular, he will have it, that they are to be used exclusively to "quench the evil" within us, but not on account of any law of Pope or Church. Luther dismisses in silence the other motives for penance recommended by the Church of yore, in the first place satisfaction for sins committed and the desire to obtain graces by reinforcing our prayers by self-imposed sacrifices.[4]

He fancies that a few words will suffice to guard against any abuse of the new ascetical doctrine: "People must beware lest this freedom degenerate into carelessness and indolence . . . into which some indeed tumble and then say that there is no need or call that we should fast or practise mortification."[5]

When, in the 3rd Commandment, he comes to speak of the practice of prayer one would naturally have expected him to give some advice and directions concerning its different forms, viz. the prayer of praise, thanksgiving, petition or penitence. All he seems to know is, however, the prayer of petition, in the case of temporal trials and needs, and amidst spiritual difficulties.[6]

Throughout the writing Luther is dominated by the idea that faith in Christ the Redeemer, and in personal salvation, must at all costs be increased. At the same time he is no less certain that the Papists neither prayed aright, nor were able to perform any good works because they had no faith.

His exhortations to a devout life (some of them fine enough in themselves, for instance, what he says on the

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 243–245=177–179.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 247 f.=182 f. Cp. the similar statements in the Exposition of the Ten Commandments (1528), pp. 480 f., 484 f.=93 f., 96 f.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 245 f.; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 180.
[4] Cp. *ib.*, p. 246=181. [5] P. 247=182.
[6] Elsewhere, however, he treats of the other forms of prayer.

trusting prayer of the sinner, on the prayers of the congregation which cry aloud to heaven and on patience under bitter sufferings), are, as a rule, intermingled to such an extent with polemical matter, that, instead of a school of the spiritual life, we seem rather to have before us the turmoil of the battlefield.[1] To understand this we must bear in mind that he wrote the book amidst the excitement into which he was thrown by the launching of the ban.

In the somewhat earlier writing on the Magnificat, which might equally well have served as a medium for the enforcing of virtue and which in some parts Luther did so use,[2] we also find the same unbridled spirit of hatred and abuse. Nor is it lacking even in his later works of edification. The most peaceable ethical excursus Luther contrives to disfigure by his bitterness, his calumnies and, not seldom, by his venom.

In the Sermon on Good Works as soon as he comes to speak of prayer he has a cut at the formalism of the prayer beloved of the Papists;[3] he then proceeds to abuse the churches and convents for their mode of life, their chanting and babbling, all performed in "obstinate unbelief," etc. At least one-half of his instruction on fasting consists in mockery of the fasting as practised by the Papists. His anger, however, reaches its climax in the 4th Commandment, where he completely forgets his subject, and, losing all mastery over himself, wildly storms against the spiritual authorities and their disorders.[4] The only allusion to anything that by any stretch of imagination would be termed a work, is the following:[5] The rascally behaviour of the Church's officers and episcopal or clerical functionaries "ought to be repressed by the secular sword because no other means is available." "The best thing, and the only remaining remedy, would be, that the King, Princes, nobles, townships and congregations should take the law into their hands, so that the bishops and clergy might have good cause to fear and therefore to obey." For everything must make room for the Word of God.

"Neither Rome, nor heaven, nor earth" may decree anything contrary to the first three Commandments.

[1] Cp. p. 237=168 f., 238 f.=170 f., 247 f.=182 f.
[2] See vol. iv., p. 501 f.
[3] P. 232=162.
[4] P. 262=202.
[5] P. 258=197.

In dealing with these first three Commandments the booklet releases the reader at one stroke from all the Church's laws hitherto observed. "Hence I allow each man to choose the day, the food and the amount of his fasting."[1] "Where the spirit of Christ is, there all is free, for faith does not allow itself to be tied down to any work."[2]

"The Christian who lives by faith has no need of any teacher's good works."[3] Here we can see the chief reason why Luther's instructions on virtue and the spiritual life are so meagre.

A Lutheran Theologian on the Lack of any Teaching Concerning "Emancipation from the World"

Even from Protestant theologians we hear the admission that Luther's Reformation failed to make sufficient allowance for the doctrine of piety; he neglected, so they urge, the question of man's "emancipation from the world," so that, even to the present day, Protestantism, and traditional Lutheran theology in particular, lacks any definite rule of piety. According to these critics, ever since Luther's day practical and adequate instructions had been wanting with regard to what, subsequent to the reconciliation with the Father brought about by Justification, still remains "to be done in the Father's house"; nor are we told how the life in Christ is to be led, of which nevertheless the Apostle Paul speaks so eloquently, though this is in reality the "main question in Christianity" and concerns the "vital interests of the Church."

The remarks just quoted occur in an article by the theologian Julius Kaftan, Oberkonsistorialrat at Berlin, published in the "Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche" in 1908 under the title, "Why does the Evangelical Church know no doctrine of the Redemption in the narrower sense, and how may this want be remedied?" We all the more gladly append some further remarks by a theologian, who, as a rule, is by no means favourably disposed to Catholicism.

According to Kaftan, Luther indeed supplied "all the elements" for the upbuilding of a doctrine of "redemption from the world"; he gave "the stimulus" to the thought; it is "not as though we had no conception of it."

But he, and the Reformation as a whole, failed to furnish any "actual, detailed doctrine" on this subject because their attack

[1] P. 246=180. [2] P. 207=127. [3] *Ib.*

was directed, and had to be directed, against the ideal of piety as they found it in the Church's monastic life; they destroyed it, so the author opines, because it was only under this distorted monkish shape that the "Christian idea of redemption from the world was then met."[1] The Reformation omitted to replace it by a better system. It suffers from having fallen into the way of giving "too great prominence to the doctrine of Justification," whereas the salvation "bestowed by Christ is not merely Justification and forgiveness of sins," as the traditional Lutheran theology seems on the surface to assume even to-day, but rather the "everlasting possession" to be reached by a Christ-like life; Justification is but the road to this possession. Because people failed to keep this in view the doctrine of the real "work of salvation" has from the beginning been made far too little of.

A further reason which explains the neglect is, according to Kaftan, the following: In Catholicism it is the Church which acts as the guide to piety and supplies all the spiritual aids required; she acts as intermediary between God and the faithful. But "the Evangelical teaching rejected the Church (in this connection) as a supernatural agency for the dispensation of the means of salvation. In her place it set the action of the Spirit working by means of the Word of God." Since this same teaching stops short at the Incarnation and Satisfaction of Christ, it has "no room for any doctrine of redemption (from the world) as a work of God."[2] Pietism, with all its irregularities, was merely an outcome of this deficiency; but even the Pietists never succeeded in formulating such a doctrine of redemption.

It is to the credit of the author that he feels this want deeply and points out the way in which theology can remedy it.[3] He would fain see introduced a system of plain directions, though framed on lines different from those of the "ostensibly final doctrinal teaching" of the Formula of Concord,[4] i.e. instructions to the devout Christian how to manifest in his life in the world the death and resurrection of Christ which St. Paul experienced in himself. Much too much emphasis had been laid in Protestantism on Luther's friendliness to the world and the joy of living, which he was the first to teach Christians in opposition to the doctrine of the Middle Ages; yet the other idea, of redemption from the world, must nevertheless retain a lasting significance in Christianity. Although, before Luther's day, the Church had erroneously striven to attain to the latter solely in the monastic life, yet there is no doubt "that the most delicate blossoms of pre-Reformation piety sprang from this soil, and that the best forces in the Church owed their origin to this source." Is it merely fortuitous, continues the author, "that the 'Imitation

[1] P. 236. [2] P. 271.

[3] Kaftan speaks of a theological want which he had attempted to supply in his own "Dogmatik." In reality, however, he has practice equally in view, and, from his statements we may infer that the want which had been apparent from Luther's day was more than a mere defect in the theory. [4] P. 281.

of Christ,' by Thomas à Kempis, should be so widely read throughout Christendom, even by Evangelicals ? Are there not many Evangelical Christians who could witness that this book has been a great help to them in a crisis of their inner life ? But whoever knows it knows what the idea of redemption from the world there signifies." All this leads our author to the conclusion : "The history of Christianity and of the Church undoubtedly proves that here [in the case of the defect in the Lutheran theology he is instancing] it is really a question of a motive power and central thought of our religion."[1] He points out to the world of our day, "that growing civilisation culminates in disgust with the world and with civilisation." "Then," he continues, "the soul again cries for God, for the God Who is above all the world and in Whom alone the heart finds rest. As it ever was, so is it still to-day."[2]

It is a satisfaction to hear this call which must rejoice the heart of every believer. The same, however, had been heard throughout the ancient Church and had met with a happy response. Not in the "Imitation" only, but in a hundred other writings of Catholics, mystic and ascetic, could our author have found the ideals of Christian perfection and of the rest in God which comes from inward severance from the world, all expressed with the utmost clearness and the warmest feeling. Nor was Christian perfection imprisoned within the walls of the monasteries ; it also flourished in the breezy atmosphere of the world. The Church taught the universality of this ideal of perfect love of God, of the imitation of Christ and of detachment from the world, and she recommended it indiscriminately to all classes, inviting people to practise it under all conditions of life and expending liberally in all directions her supernatural powers in order to attain her aim. Among the best of those whose writings inaugurated a school of piety may be classed St. Bernard and Gerson, in whom Luther had found light and edification when still a zealous monk. With him, however, the case was very different. Of the works he bequeathed to posterity the Protestant theologian referred to above, says regretfully : They contain neither a "doctrine" nor a definite "scheme of instruction" on "that side of life which faces God." "No clear, conclusive thoughts on this all-important matter are to be found."

On the other hand it must be added that there is no want of "clear, conclusive thoughts" to a quite opposite effect ;

[1] P. 276. [2] P. 278.

not merely on enjoyment of the world, but on a kind of sovereignty over it which is scarcely consistent with the effort after self-betterment.

The Means of Self-Reform and their Reverse Side

Self-denial as the most effective means of self-education in the good, and self-conquest in outward and inward things, receive comparatively small attention from Luther; rather he is set on delivering people from the "anxiety-breeding," traditional prejudice in favour of spiritual renunciation, obedience to the Church and retrenchment in view of the evil. This deliverance, thanks to its alluring and attractive character, was welcomed, in spite of Luther's repeated warnings against any excess of the spirit of the world. His abandonment of the path of perfection so strongly recommended by Christ and his depreciation of "peculiar" works and "singular" practices were more readily understood and also more engaging than his words in favour of real works of faith. He set up his own inward experiences of the difficulty and, as he thought, utter futility of the conflict with self, together with his hostility to all spiritual efforts exceeding the common bounds, as the standard for others, and, in fact, even for the Church; in the Catholic past, on the other hand, the faithful had been taught to recognise the standard of the Church, their teacher and guide, as the rule by which to judge of their own experiences.

Here to prove what we have said, would necessitate the repetition of what has already been given elsewhere.

Luther's writings, particularly his letters, also contain certain instructions, which, fortunately, have not become the common property of Protestants, but which everybody must feel to be absolutely opposed to anything like self-betterment. We need only call to mind his teaching, that temptations to despondency and despair are best withstood by committing some sin in defiance of the devil, or by diverting the mind to sensual and carnal distractions.[1] The words: "What matters it if we commit a fresh sin?"[2]

[1] Cp. the letter to Hier. Weller, July (?), 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 159; Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," pp. 11, 89, etc.; Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 450; "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 299. See our vol. iii., p. 175 ff.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 339; iii., p. 180 ff.; above, p. 9 ff.

since through faith we have forgiveness, and the other similar utterance, "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe more boldly still," are characteristic of him, though he would have been unwilling to see them pressed or taken too literally. By these and other statements he did, however, seriously endanger the ethical character of sin; in reality he diminished the abhorrence for sin, though no doubt he did not fully perceive the consequences of his act.[1]

To the man who had become sensible of the ensnaring influence of the world and of its evil effects upon himself, or who on account of his mental build felt himself endangered by it, Catholic moralists advised retirement, recollection, self-examination and solitude. Luther was certainly not furthering the cause of perfection when he repeatedly insisted, with an emphasis that is barely credible, that solitude must be avoided as the deadly foe of the true life of the soul, and that what should be sought was rather company and distraction. Solitude was a temptation to sin. "I too find," so he says, "that I never fall into sin more frequently than when I am alone. . . . Quietude calls forth the worst of thoughts. Whatever our trouble be, it then becomes much more dangerous," etc.[2] Of course, in the case of persons of gloomy disposition Luther was quite right in recommending company, but it was just in doing so that he exceeded the bounds in his praise of sensual distractions;[3] of his own example, too, he makes far too much. On the other hand, all the great men in the Church had sought to find the guiding light of self-knowledge in solitude; this they regarded as a school for the subjugation of unruly emotions.

Not only were self-control and self-restraint something strange to Luther,[4] but he often went so far as to adduce curious theoretical reasonings of his own to prove that they could have no place in his public life and controversies, and why he and his helpers were compelled to give the reins to anger, hatred and abuse. Thus the work of self-improvement was renounced in yet another essential point.

[1] Above, vol. iii., p. 185 f.
[2] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 155 ff.
[3] Cp. our vol. iii., p. 176 f.
[4] Vol. iii., p. 213 f.

Then again with regard to prayer. His exhortations thereto are numerous enough and he himself prayed frequently. But it is not necessary to be an ascetic to see that several things are wanting in his admonitions to prayer. The first is the salt of contrition and compunction. He was less alive to the wholesome underlying feeling of melancholy that characterises the soul which prays to God in the consciousness of having abused its free-will, than he was to the suggestions of self-confidence and assurance of salvation. The second thing wanting is the humility which should permeate prayer even when exalted to the highest limits of trusting confidence. If man, as Luther taught, is incapable of any work, then of course there can be no sense of shame at not having done more to please God and to merit greater grace from Him. Moreover, Luther indirectly encouraged people to pray in the bold consciousness of being justified and to look for the keeping of the law as a natural consequence of such "faith." Lastly, and this sums up everything, we miss the spirit of love in his often so strongly worded and eloquent exhortations to prayer; the spirit which should have led him to resignation to God's designs, and to commit his life's work to the Will of God with a calm indifference as to its eventual success.[1] Hardly ever do we find any trace of that zeal for souls which embraces the whole of God's broad kingdom even to the heathen, in short, the whole of the Church's sphere.[2] On the other hand, however, he expressly exhorts his followers to increase the ardour of their prayers, after his own example, by interspersing them with curses on all whose views were different.[3]

In place of the pleasing variety of the old exercises of prayer—from the Office recited by the clergy with its daily commemoration of the Saints down to the multifarious devotions of the people, to say nothing of the great Sacrifice of the Altar, the very heart's pulse of the Church—he recommends as a rule only the Our Father, the Creed and the Psalms—prayers indeed rich beyond all others and which will ever hold the first place among Christian devotions. But had they not been brought closer to the heart

[1] Cp. on Luther's prayer, vol. iii., p. 206 f.; iv., p. 274 ff.
[2] Vol. iii., p. 213 f.
[3] Vol. iii., p. 207 f.; iv., p. 311.

formerly in the inner and outer life of prayer dealt with in the writings of the Catholic masters of the spiritual life, and exemplified in the churches and monasteries, and even in private houses and the very streets? But behind all this rich display Luther saw lurking the demon of "singular works." The monk absorbed in contemplation was, in Luther's eyes, an unhappy wretch sitting "in filth" up to his neck. Thus he restricts himself to recommending the old short formulas of prayer. In accordance with his doctrine that faith alone avails, he desires that sin, and the intention of sinning, should be withstood by the use of the Our Father: "That you diligently learn to say the Our Father, the Creed and the Ten Commandments."[1] "Grant, O God (thus must you pray), that Thy Name be hallowed by me, Thy Kingdom come to me, and Thy Will be done in me"; in this wise they would come to scorn "devil, death and hell."[2] He indeed kept in touch with the people by means of the olden prayers, but, even into them, he knew how to introduce his own new views; the Kingdom of God, which to him is forgiveness of sins,[3] "must come to us by faith," and the chief article of the whole Creed with which to defy "death, devil and hell" was the "*remissio peccatorum.*" These remarks must not, however, be understood as detracting from the value of his fine, practical, and often sympathetic expositions of the Our Father, whether in his special work on it in 1518 or in the Larger Catechism.[4]

Of the numerous "man-made laws" which he banished at one stroke by denying the Church's authority there is no need to speak here. Without a doubt the overturning of all these barriers erected against human lusts and wilfulness was scarcely conducive to the progress of the individual.

Nor does the absence of any higher standard of life in his own case[5] serve to recommend his system of ethics. Seeing that, as has been already pointed out,[6] he himself is disposed to admit his failings, the apparent confidence with which,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 553. Cp. pp. 554, 558.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 552.
[3] W. Walther, "Die Sittlichkeit nach Luther," p. 63.
[4] The Explanation of the Our Father in 1518, "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 74 ff; 9, p. 122 ff; Erl. ed., 21, p. 156 ff; 45, p. 203 ff. Noteworthy additions to it were made by Luther in 1519, *ib.*, 6, pp. 8 ff., 20 ff.=45, p. 208 ff. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 116 f., 291 f.
[5] Above, vol. iii., pp. 169 f., 211 f. [6] Vol. iii., p. 200 ff.

in order to exalt his reform of ethics, he appeals to the biblical verity, that the truth of a doctrine is proved by its moral fruits, is all the more surprising.

Of this confidence we have a remarkable example in a sermon devoted to the explanation of the 1st Epistle of St. John. At the same time the exceptional boldness of his language and the resolute testimony he bears in his own favour constitute striking proof of how the very firmness of his attitude impressed his followers and exercised over many a seductive spell. The weakness of the Reformer's ethics seems all at once to vanish before his mighty eloquence.

The discourse in question, where at the same time he vindicates his own conduct, belongs to 1532. About that time he preached frequently at Wittenberg on St. John's sublime words concerning the love of God and our neighbour (1 Jo. iv. 16–21). His object was to cleanse and better the morals of Wittenberg, the low standard of which he deplores, that the results of justification by faith might shine forth more brightly. At that very time he was treating with the Elector and the Saxon Estates in view of a new visitation of all the parishes to be held the next year, which might promote the good of morality. The sermons were duly reported by his pupil Cruciger, whose notes were published at Wittenberg in 1533 under the general title of "A Sermon on Love."[1]

Dealing therein with ethical practice he starts by proclaiming that, according to the "pious Apostle" whose doctrines he was expounding, everything depends on Christians proving by their fruits whether they really "walk in love." Of many, however, who not only declared themselves well acquainted with the principles of faith and ethics but even professed to be qualified to teach them, it was true that, "if we applied and manifested in our lives their ethics after their example, then we should be but poorly off."[2] Such men must, nevertheless, be tested by their works. Nor does he exempt himself from this duty of putting ethics to a practical test.

Nowhere else does he insist more boldly than in these sermons on proof by actual deeds, even in his own case. According to the words of John, so he says, a life of love would give them "confidence in the Day of Judgment" (iv. 17). Confidence, nay, a spirit of holy defiance, even in the presence of death and judgment, must fill the hearts of all who acted aright, owing to the very testimony of their fellow-men to the blamelessness of their lives. "We must be able to boast [with Christ, 'the reconciliation for our sins'] not before God alone but before God and all Christendom, and against the whole world, that no one

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 36, pp. 416–477; Erl. ed., 18^2, pp. 304–361.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 420=308 f.

can truthfully condemn or even accuse us." "We must be able to assure ourselves that we have lived in such a way that no one can take scandal at us"; we must have this testimony, "that we have walked on earth in simplicity and godly piety, and that no one can charge us with having been given to 'trickery.'" In this wise had Paul countered false doctrines by boasting, just as Moses and Samuel had already done under the Old Covenant.[1]

Coming to his own person the speaker thinks he can honestly say the same of himself, though, like the rest, he too must confess to being still in need of the article of the forgiveness of sins. There were false teachers who could not appeal so confidently to the morality of their lives, "proud, puffed-up spirits who lay claim to a great and wonderful holiness, who want to reform the whole world and to do something singular in order that all may say that they alone are true Christians. This sort of thing lasts indeed for a while, during which they parade and strut, but, when the hour of death comes, that is the end of all such idle nonsense."[2] He himself, with the faithful teachers and good Christians, is in a very different case: "If I must boast of how I have acted in my position towards everyone then I will say: I witness before you and all the world, and know that God too witnesses on my behalf together with all His angels, that I have not falsified God's Word, His Baptism or the Sacrament but have preached and acted faithfully as much as was in me, and suffered all ill solely for God's and His Word's sake. Thus must all the Saints boast."[3]

He lays the greatest stress on the unanimous testimony which the preacher must receive from his fellow-men and from posterity. He must be able to say, "you shall be my witnesses," he "must be able to call upon all men to bear him witness"; they must bear us witness on the Last Day that we have lived aright and shown by our deeds that we were Christians. If this is the case, if they can point to their practice of good works, then the preaching of good works can be insisted on with all the emphasis required.[4] It is natural, however, that towards the end Luther lays greater stress on his teaching than on his works.

On his preaching of the value of good works he solemnly assures us: "We can testify before the whole world that we have preached much more grandly and forcefully on good works than even those who calumniate us."[5]

Self-Reform and Hatred of the Foe

In speaking of Luther, his staunch friends are wont to boast of his lifelong struggle against the fetters of the Papacy and of the overwhelming power of his assault on the olden Church; this, so they imply, redounded to his glory and showed his moral superiority.

[1] P. 448 f.=335 f. [2] P. 444=331. [3] P. 452=339.
[4] P. 449 ff.=336 ff. [5] P. 447=334.

In what follows we shall therefore consider some of the main ethical features of this struggle of Luther's and of the attitude he adopted in his conflict with Popery. His very defence of himself and of the moral effects of his preaching, which we have just heard him pronounce subsequent to the Diet of Augsburg, invites us to consider in the light of ethics his public line of action, as traced in his writings of that period. These years represent a turning-point in his life, and here, if anywhere, we should be able to detect his higher moral standard and the power of his new principles to effect a change first of all in himself. In the sermon of 1532 (above, p. 96) he had said: The new Gospel which he had "preached rightly and faithfully" made those who accepted it "to walk in simplicity and godly piety" according to the law of love, and to stand forth "blameless before all the world." Could he truthfully, he, the champion of this Gospel, really lay any claim to these qualities as here he seems to do, at least indirectly?

His controversial tracts dating from that time display anything but "simplicity and godly piety." His hate was without bounds, and his fury blazed forth in thunderbolts which slew all who dared to attempt to bridge the chasm between him and the Catholic Church. Reproaching voices, about him and within him, seemed to him to come from so many devils. The Coburg, where he stayed, was assuredly "full of devils," so he wrote.[1] There, in spite of his previous attempts to jest and be cheerful,[2] and notwithstanding the violent and distracting labours in which he was engaged, the devil had actually established an "embassy," troubling him with many anxieties and temptations.[3]

The devil he withstood by paroxysms of that hate and rage which he had always in store for his enemies. "The Castle may be crammed with devils, yet Christ reigneth there in

[1] To Melanchthon from the Coburg, July 31, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 157: "*ex arce dæmonibus plena.*"

[2] To the same, April 23, 1530, *ib.*, 7, p. 308: "*Hæc satis pro ioco, sed serio et necessario ioco, qui mihi irruentes cogitationes repelleret, si tamen repellet.*"

[3] To the same, May 12, 1530, *ib.*, 7, p. 333: "*Eo die, quo literæ tuæ e Norimberga venerunt, habuit satan legationem suam apud me,*" etc. See vol. ii., p. 390. Cp. to the same, June, 1530 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 43), where he calls the devil his torturer, and to the same, June 30, 1530, *ib.*, p. 51, where he speaks of his "private struggles with the devil."

the midst of His foes ! "[1] He includes in the same category the Papists, and the Turks who then were threatening Europe : Both are " monsters," both have been " let loose by the fury of the devil," both represent a common " woe doomed to overwhelm the world in these last days of Christendom."[2] These " stout jackasses " (of the Diet of Augsburg), so he cried from the ramparts of his stronghold, " want to meddle in the business of the Church. Let them try ! "[3] " The very frenzy and madness of our foes of itself alone proves that we are in the right."[4] " Their blasphemy, their murders, their contempt of the Gospel, and other enormities against it, increase day by day and must bring the Turk into the field against us."[5] " I am a preacher of Christ," so he assures us, " and Christ is the truth."— But is hatred a mark of a disciple of Christ, or of a higher mission for the reformation of doctrine and worship ?

Elsewhere Luther himself describes hate as a " true image of the devil ; in fact, it is neither human nor diabolical but the devil himself whose whole being is nothing but an everlasting burning," etc. " The devil is always acting contrary to love." " Such is his way ; God works nothing but benefits and deeds of charity, while he on the contrary performs nothing but works of hate."[6] On other occasions in his sermons he speaks in familiar and at the same time inspiring words of the beauty of Christian love. " Love is a great and rich treasure, worth many hundred thousand gulden, or a great kingdom. Who is there who would not esteem it highly and pursue it to the limit of his power, nay, pour out sweat and blood for it if he only hoped or knew how to obtain it ! . . . What is sun, moon, heavens or all creation, all the angels, all the saints compared with it ? Love is nothing but the one, unspeakable, eternal good and the highest treasure, which is God Himself."[7]

[1] To the same, July 31, 1530, *ib.*, 8, p. 157.
[2] Cp. to the same, April 23, 1530, *ib.*, 7, p. 303.
[3] To the same, May 12, 1530, *ib.*, p. 333.
[4] To the same, May 15, 1530, *ib.*, p. 335.
[5] To the same, Aug. 15, 1530, *ib.*, 8, p. 190 : " *Christus vivit et regnat. Fiant sane dæmones, si ita volunt, monachi vel nonnæ quoque. Nec forma melior eos decet, quam qua sese mundo hactenus vendiderunt adorandos.*" The " monks or nuns " is an allusion to the appearance of the " spectre-monks " at Spires just before the Diet of Augsburg ; see vol. ii., p. 389 f.
[6] " Werke," Weim. ed., 36, p. 424 ; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 313 f.
[7] *Ib.*, p. 423=312.—The so-called " Sermon on Love " (above,

But his "Vermanũg an die geistlichen versamlet auff dem Reichstag zu Augsburg" (which he wrote from the Coburg) was the fruit, not of love, but of the most glowing hate.[1] In a private letter he calls it quite rightly, not an "exhortation" (Vermanũg), but "an invective" against the clergy,[2] and, in another letter, admits the "violent spirit" in which he had written it; when composing it the abusive thoughts had rushed in on him like an "uninvited band of moss-troopers."[3] But, that he drove them back as he declares he did, is not discernible from the work in question.

In the booklet under discussion he several times uses what would seem to be words of peace, and, in one passage, even sketches a scheme for reunion; but, as a Protestant critic of the latter says, not altogether incorrectly, the "idea was of its very nature impossible of execution."[4] Indeed, we may say that Luther himself could see well enough that the idea was a mere deception; the best motto for the writing would be: Enmity and hatred until death!

The Catholic members of the Diet are there represented as "obstinate and stiff-necked," and as "bloodhounds raging wantonly"; they had hitherto, but all to no purpose, "tried fraud and trickery, force and anger, murder and penalties." To the bishops he cries: "May the devil who drives them dog their footsteps, and all our misfortunes fall on their head!"

p. 96 f.) seeks to demonstrate in the above words the value of love of our neighbour, and, that this necessarily resulted from true faith. It abounds in beautiful sayings concerning the advantage of this virtue. Cruciger had his reasons for publishing it, one being, as he says in the dedication, to stop the mouths of those who never cease to cry out against our people as though we neither taught nor practised anything concerning love and good works." (Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 305.) Köstlin-Kawerau remarks (2, p. 273): "The fundamental evil was that the new Church included amongst its members so many who were indifferent to such preaching; they had joined it not merely without any real interior conversion, but without any spiritual awakening or sympathy, purely by reason of outward circumstances." It must be added that the Sermon, though intended as a remedy, suffers from the defect of being permeated through and through with a spirit of bitter hate against the Church Catholic; in the very first pages we find the speaker complaining, that the devil, "who cannot bear the Word," "attacks us . . . in order to murder us by means of his tyrants"; "we are, however, forced to have the devil for our guest," who molests us "with his crew." Weim. ed., 36, p. 417 f.; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 306 f.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 356 ff.

[2] To Melanchthon, May 12, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 332.

[3] To the same, April 29, 1530, *ib.*, p. 313: "*Oratio mea ad clerum procedit; crescit inter manus et materia et impetus, ut plurimos Landsknechtos prorsus vi repellere cogar, qui insalutati non cessant obstrepere.*" Cp. Kolde, "Luther," 2, p. 330.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 199.

He puts them on a level with "procurers and whoremongers," and trounces them as "the biggest robbers of benefices, bawds and procurers to be found in all the world."[1]—There had been many cases of infringement of the law of celibacy among both lower and higher clergy previous to Luther's advent, while the Wittenberg spirit of freedom set free in the German lands helped considerably to increase the evil amongst the ranks of the Catholic clergy; but to what unheard-of exaggerations, all steeped in hate, did not Luther have recourse the better to inflame the people and to defend the illicit marriages of those of the clergy who now were the preachers of the new religion? He was about "to sweep out of the house the harlots and abducted spouses" of the bishops, and not merely to show up the bishops as real "lechers and brothel-keepers" (a favourite expression of his), but to drag them still deeper in the mire. It was his unclean fancy, which delighted to collect the worst to be found in corrupt localities abroad, that led him to say: "And, moreover, we shall do clean away with your Roman Sodom, your Italian weddings, your Venetian and Turkish brides, and your Florentine bridegrooms!"[2]

The pious founders of the bishoprics and monasteries, he cries, "never intended to found bawdy-houses or Roman robber-churches," nor yet to endow with their money "strumpets and rascals, or Roman thieves and robbers." The bishops, however, are set on "hiding, concealing and burying in silence the whole pot-broth of their abominations and corrupt, unepiscopal abuses, shame, vice and noxious perversion of Christendom, and on seeing them lauded and praised," whereas it is high time that they "spat upon their very selves"; their auxiliary bishops "smear the unschooled donkeys with chrism" (ordain priests) and these in turn seek "to rise to power"; yet revolt against them and against all authority is brewing in the distance; if the bloody deeds of Münzer's time were repeated, then, he, Luther, would not be to blame; "men's minds are prepared and greatly embittered and, that, not without due cause"; if you "go to bits" then "your blood be upon your own head!" Meanwhile it is too bad that the bishops "should go about in mitres and great pomp," as though we were "old fools"; but still worse is it that they should make of all this pomp "articles of faith and a matter of conscience, so that people must commit sin if they refuse to worship such child's play; surely this is the devil's own work." Of such hateful misrepresentations, put forward quite seriously, a dozen other instances might be cited from this writing. "But that we *must* look upon such child's play as articles of faith, and befool ourselves with bishops' mitres, from that we cannot get away, no matter how much we may storm or jeer."[3]

The writing culminates in the following outburst: "In short we and you alike know that you are living with-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 391 ff.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 395 f. [3] *Ib.*, p. 406.

out God's Word, but that, on our side, we have God's Word."

"If I live I shall be your bane; if I die I shall be your death! For God Himself has driven me to attack you! I must, as Hosea says, be to you as a bear and a lion in the way of Assur. You shall have no peace from me until you amend or rush to your own destruction."[1]

At a later date, of the saying "If I live," etc., Luther made the Latin couplet: "*Pestis eram vivus moriens ero mors tua papa.*" In life, O Pope, I was thy plague, in dying I shall be thy death. He first produced this verse at Spalatin's home at Altenburg on his return journey from the Coburg; afterwards he frequently repeated it, for instance, at Schmalkalden in 1537, when he declared, that he would bequeath his hatred of the Papacy as an heirloom to his disciples.[2]

As early as 1522 he had also made use of the Bible passage concerning the lion and the bear in his "Wyder den falsch genantten geystlichen Standt" with the like assurance of the Divine character of his undertaking, and in a form which shows how obsessed he was by the spirit of hate: He was sure of his doctrine and by it would judge even the angels; without it no one could be saved, for it was God's and not his, for which reason his sentence too was God's and not his: "Let this be my conclusion. If I live you shall have no peace from me, if you kill me, you shall have ten times less peace; and I shall be to you as Oseas says, xiii. 8, a bear in the path and a lion in the road. However you may treat me you shall not have your will, until your brazen front and iron neck are broken either unwillingly or by grace. Unless you amend, as I would gladly wish, then we may persist, you in your anger and hostility and I in paying no heed."[3]

On another occasion he tells us how he would gladly have left Wittenberg with Melanchthon and the others who were going by way of Nuremberg to the Diet of Augsburg, but a friend had said to him: "Hold your tongue! Your tongue is an evil one!"[4]

[1] *Ib.*, p. 396 f. [2] Cp. our vol. iii., p. 435.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 107; Erl. ed., 28, p. 144.

[4] To Eobanus Hessus, April 23, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 301. Cp. n. 2 in Enders, who suggests the above translation of "*tu habes malam vocem.*" We read in Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 199: "We must admit, that, judging by the tone of this tract [the 'Vermanũg'] Luther's 'voice' would have been out of place at Augsburg, as he admits in his letter to Eobanus Hessus."

After the publication of the "Vermanũg an die Geistlichen," or possibly even before, Melanchthon seems to have written to him, re-echoing the observations of startled and anxious friends, and saying that the writing had been "variously" appreciated, in itself a significant remark; Luther himself at that time certainly dreaded the censure of his adherents. Still, he insists as defiantly as ever on his "invective": "Let not your heart be troubled," he admonishes Melanchthon, "My God is a God of fools, Who is wont to laugh at the wise. Whence I trouble myself about them not the least bit."[1] On the contrary, he even came near regarding his writing as a special work of God.

As we have already pointed out, the defiant and violent steps he took, only too often became in his eyes special works of God. His notorious, boundless sense of his own greatness, to which this gave rise, is the first of the phenomena which accompanied his hate; these it will now be our duty briefly to examine in order better to appreciate the real strength of his ethical principles in his own case.

Companion-Phenomena of his Hate

As a matter of fact Luther's sense of his superiority was so great that the opponents he attacked had to listen to language such as no mortal had ever before dreamed of making use of against the Church.

The Church is being reformed "in my age" in "a Divine way, not after human ways." "Were we to fall, then Christ would fall with us."[2]

Whenever he meets with contradiction, whenever he hears even the hint of a reproach or accusation, he at once ranges himself—as he does, for instance, in the "Vermanũg"—on the side of the persecuted "prophets and apostles," nay, he even likens himself to Christ.[3] He stood alone, without miracles, and devoid of holiness, as he himself candidly informed Henry VIII. of England; nevertheless he pits himself against the heads of both Church and Empire assembled at the Diet.

All he could appeal to was his degree of Doctor of Theology: "Had I not been a Doctor, the devil would have

[1] On June 5, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 367.
[2] See vol. iv., p. 338 f. [3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 24², p. 364.

given me much trouble, for it is no small matter to attack the whole Papacy and to charge it " (with error).[1] In the last instance, however, his self-confidence recalls him to the proud consciousness of his entire certainty. " Thus our cause stands firm, because we know how we believe and how we live."[2]

With these words from his " Vermanũg " he defies the whole of the present and of the past, the Pope and all his Councils.

He knows—and that suffices—that what he has and proclaims is God's Word ; " and if you have God's Word you may say : Now that I have the Word what need have I to ask what the Councils say ? "[3] " Among all the Councils I have never found one where the Holy Spirit rules. . . . There will never be no Council [*sic*], according to the Holy Spirit, where the people have to agree. God allows this because He Himself wills to be the Judge and suffers not men to judge. Hence He commands every man to know what he believes."[4] Luther only, and those who follow him, know what they believe ; he takes the place of all the councils, Doctors of the Church, Popes and bishops, in short, of all the ecclesiastical sources of theology.

" The end of the world may now come," he said, in 1540, " for all that pertains to the knowledge of God has now been supplied " (by me).[5]

With this contempt for the olden Church he combines a most imperious exclusiveness in his treatment even of those who like him were opposed to the Pope, whether they were individuals or formed schools of thought. They must follow his lead, otherwise there awaits them the sentence he launched at the Zwinglians from the Coburg : " These Sacramentarians are not merely liars but the very embodiment of lying, deceit and hypocrisy ; this both Carlstadt and Zwingli prove by word and deed." Their books, he says, contain pestilential stuff ; they refused to retract even when confuted by him, but simply because they stood in fear of their own following ; he would continue to put them to shame by those words, which so angered them : " You have a spirit different from ours." He could not look upon them as brothers ; this was duly expressed in the article in which he went so far as to promise them that love which was due even to

[1] Cordatus, " Tagebuch," p. 363 f.
[2] " Werke," *ib.*, p. 361 ; cp. p. 396.
[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 313 ; Erl. ed., 33, p. 331. Sermons on Genesis, 1527.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 312 f.=330 f.
[5] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 108. From the year 1540.

enemies. On his own authority he curtly dubs them "heretics," and is resolved in this way to tread unharmed with Christ through Satan's kingdom and all his lying artifices.[1] Luther's aggravating exclusiveness went hand-in-hand with his overweening self-confidence.

In consequence of this treatment the Swiss, through the agency of Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, complained to Bucer, "Beware of not believing Luther readily or of not yielding to him! He is a scorpion; no matter how carefully he is handled he will sting, even though to begin with he seems to caress your hand."[2] To this Bucer, who had also ventured to differ from Luther, wrote in his reply: "He has flung another scathing book at us. . . . He speaks, and means to speak, much more harshly than heretofore." "He will not now endure even the smallest contradiction, and I am sure that, were I to go any further, I should cause such a tragedy that all the churches would once more be convulsed."[3] Another Protestant voice we hear exclaiming with a fine irony: "Luther rages, thunders and lightens as though he were a Jupiter and had all the bolts of heaven at his command to launch against us. . . . Has he then become an emperor of the Christian army on the model of the Pope, so as to be able to issue every pronouncement that his brain suggests?"[4] "He confuses the two Natures in Christ and brings forward foolish, nay godless, statements. If we may not condemn this, then what, pray, may be condemned?"[5]

His natural lack of charity, of which we shall have later on to add many fresh and appalling examples to those already enumerated, aggravated his hatred, his sense of his own greatness and his exclusiveness. What malicious hatred is there not apparent in his advice that Zwingli and Œcolampadius should be condemned, "even though this led to violence being offered them."[6] It is with reluctance that one gazes on Luther's abuse of the splendid gifts of mind and heart with which he had been endowed.

A recent Protestant biographer of Carlstadt's laments the "frightful harshness of his (Luther's) polemics." "How deep the traces left by his mode of controversy were, ought not to be overlooked," so he writes. "From that time forward this sort of thing took the place of any real discussion of differences of opinion between members of the Lutheran camp, nor did people even seem aware of how far they were thus drifting from the kindliness and dignity of Christian modes of thought."[7]

[1] To Jacob Probst, June 1, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 353 f.
[2] To Bucer, July 12, 1532, in "Anal. Lutherana," ed. Kolde, p. 203.
[3] "Anal.," *loc. cit.*
[4] Leo Judae, l. c., 203.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 204.
[6] See our vol. iv., p. 87.
[7] H. Barge, "Carlstadt," see our vol. ii., p. 154.

What is here said of the treatment of opponents within the camp applies even more strongly to Luther's behaviour towards Catholics.

The following episode of his habitual persecution of Albert, Archbishop and Elector of Mayence, illustrates this very well.

On June 21, 1535, the Archbishop in accordance with the then law and with the sentence duly pronounced by the judge, had caused Hans von Schönitz, once his trusted steward, to be executed; the charge of which he had been proved guilty was embezzlement on a gigantic scale. The details of the case, which was dealt with rather hurriedly, have not yet been adequately cleared up, but even Protestant researchers agree that Schönitz deserved to be dealt with as a "public thief,"[1] seeing that "in the pecuniary transactions which he undertook for Albert he was not unmindful of his own advantage";[2] "there is no doubt that he was rightly accused of all manner of peculation and cheating."[3] Luther, however, furiously entered the lists on behalf of the executed man and against the detested Archbishop who, in spite of his private faults, remained faithful to the Church and was a hindrance to the spread of Lutheranism in Germany. Luther implicitly believed all that was told him, of Hans's innocence and of Albert's supposed abominable motives, by Schönitz's brother and his friend Ludwig Rabe—who himself was implicated in the matter—and both of whom came to Wittenberg. "Both naturally related the case from their own point of view."[4] Luther sent two letters to the Cardinal, one more violent than the other.[5] The second would seem to have been intended for publication and was sent to the press, though at present no copy of it can be discovered. In it in words of frightful violence he lays at the door of the Prince of the Church the blood of the man done to death. The Archbishop was a "thorough-paced Epicurean who does not believe that Abel lives in God and that his blood still cries more loudly than Cain, his brother's murderer, fancies." He, Luther, like another Elias, must call down woes "upon Achab and Isabel." He had indeed heard of many evil deeds done by Cardinals, "but I had not taken your Cardinalitial Holiness for such an insolent, wicked dragon. . . . Your Electoral Highness may if he likes commit a nuisance in the Emperor's Court of Justice, infringe the freedom of the city of Halle, usurp the sword of Justice belonging to Saxony, and, over and above this, look on the world and on all reason as rags fit only for the closet"—such is a fair sample of the language—and, moreover, treat everything in a Popish, Roman, Cardinalitial

[1] F. Hülsse, "Card. Albrecht und Hans Schenitz," "Magdeburger Geschichtsblätter," 1889, p. 82; cp. Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 10, p. 182, who remarks of F. W. E. Roth's review in the "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 118, 1896, p. 160 f.: "The author does not seem to be acquainted with Hülsse's work and therefore condemns Albert."

[2] Enders, *ib.*, p. 181. [3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 419.

[4] Enders, *ib.*

[5] On July 31, 1535, and Jan.–Feb., 1536, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, pp. 98 and 125 ("Briefwechsel," 10, pp. 180 and 296).

way, but, please God, our Lord God will by our prayers one day compel your Electoral Highness to sweep out all the filth yourself."

In the first letter he had threatened fiercely the hated Cardinal with publishing what he knew (or possibly only feigned to know) of his faults; he would not "advise him to stir up the filth any further"; here in the second letter he charges him in a general way with robbery, petty theft and fraud in the matter of Church property, also with having cheated a woman of the town whom he used to keep; he deserved to be "hanged on a gallows three times as high as the Giebichstein," where Schönitz had been executed. Incidentally he promises him a new work that shall reveal all his doings. The threatened work was, however, never published, Albert's family, the Brandenburgs, having raised objections at the Electoral Court of Saxony. Albert, however, offered quite frankly to submit the Schönitz case and the grievances raised by his relatives to the judgment of George of Anhalt, one of the princes who had gone over to Lutheranism, who was perfectly at liberty to take the advice of Jonas, nay, even of Luther himself. "In this we may surely see a proof that he was not conscious of being in the least blameworthy."[1] At any rate he seems to have been quite willing to lay his case even before his most bitter foe.[2]

Such was Luther's irritability and quickness of temper, even in private concerns, that, at times, even in his letters, he would pour forth the most incredible threats.

On one occasion, in 1542, when a messenger sent by Justus Jonas happened to offend him, he at once wrote an "angry letter" to Jonas and on the next day followed it up with another in which he says, that his anger has not yet been put to rest; never is Jonas to send such people into his house again or else he will order them to be gagged and put under restraint. "Remember this, for I have said it. This man may scold and do the grand elsewhere, but not in Luther's house, unless indeed he wants to have his tongue torn out. Are we going to allow such caitiffs as these to play the emperor?"[3]—He had, as we already know, a sad experience with a certain girl named Rosina, whom he had engaged as a servant, but who turned out to be a person of loose morals and brought his house into disrepute. "She shall never again have the chance of deceiving anyone so long as there is water enough in the Elbe," so he writes of her to a judge. In letters to other persons he accuses her of "villainy and fornication"; she had "shamed all the inmates of his house with the [assumed] name of Truchsess"; he could only think that she had been "foisted on him by the

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 420.
[2] Enders, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 297; Hülsse, p. 61.
[3] On March 10, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 442.

Papists as an arch-prostitute—the god-forsaken minx and lying bag of trouble, who has damaged my household from garret to cellar . . . accursed harridan and perjured, thieving drab that she is!" Away with her "for the honour of the Evangel."[1]

Even in younger days he had been too much accustomed to give the reins to his excitement, as his two indignant letters (his own description of them) to his brother monks at Erfurt show.[2] Even his upbringing of his own children, highly lauded as it has been, suffered from this same lack of self-control. "The mere disobedience of a boy would stir him to his very depths. For instance, he admits of a nephew he had living with him—a son of his brother James—that once 'he angered me so greatly as almost to be the death of me, so that for a while I lost the use of my bodily powers.'"[3]—So exasperated was he with the lawyers who treacherously deceived the people that he went so far as to demand that their tongues should be torn out. At times he confesses his hot temper, owning and acknowledging that it was "sinful"; to such fits of passion he was still subject, but, as a rule, his anger was at least both right and called for, for he could not avoid being angry where it was "a question of the soul and of hell." Anger, he also says, refreshed his inner man, sharpened his wits and chased away his temptations; he had to be angry in order to write, preach or pray well.[4]

Repeatedly he seemed on the point of quitting Wittenberg for ever in revenge for all the neglect he met with there; "I can no longer contain my anger and disappointment."[5] It was to this depression of spirits that he was referring when he said, that, often, in his indignation, he had "flung down the keys on Our Lord God's threshold."[6] He sees his inability to change his surroundings and how Popery refuses to be overthrown; yet, as he told us, he is determined to "rain abuse and curses on the miscreants [the Papists] till he is carried to the grave," and to provide the "thunder and lightning for the funeral" of the foe.[7]

A gloomy, uncanny passion often glows in his words and serves to fire the fanatism of the misguided masses.

"Lo and behold how my blood boils and how I long to see the Papacy punished!" And what was the punishment he looked for? Just before he had said that the Pope, his

[1] To Johann Göritz, judge at Leipzig, Jan. 29, 1544, *ib.*, p. 625. Cp. for the account of Rosina, vol. iii., pp. 217 f., 280 f.

[2] Vol. i., p. 59. "*Stupidæ litteræ*" here perhaps means "indignant" rather than "amazed" letters.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 483.

[4] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn." (Loesche), p. 200. Cp. above vol. iii., p. 437 f.

[5] To Catherine, end of July, 1545, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 753.

[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 127. Cp. above vol. iv., p. 276.

[7] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 470; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 127. "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen," 1531.

Cardinals and all his court should have "the skins of their bodies drawn off over their heads; the hides might then be flung into the healing bath [the sea] at Ostia, or into the fire," unless indeed they found means to pay back all the alien property that the Pope, the "Robber of the Churches, had stolen only to waste, lose and squander it, and to spend it on whores and their ilk." Yet even this punishment fell short of the crime, for "my spirit knows well that no temporal penalty can avail to make amends even for one Bull or Decree."[1]

Side by side with language so astonishing we must put other sayings which paint his habitual frame of mind in a light anything but favourable: "It is God's Word! Let what cannot stand fall . . . no matter what!"[2] "The Word is true, or everything crumbles into ruin!"[3] "Even if *you* will not follow" —such were his words to Staupitz as early as 1521, "at least suffer *me* to go on and be carried away [*'ire et rapi'*]." "I have put on my horns against the Roman Antichrists";[4] in these words Luther compares himself to a raving bull.

This frame of mind tended to promote his natural tendency to violence, hitherto repressed. His proposal to flay all the members of the Roman Curia was not by any means his first hint at deeds of blood; such allusions occur in other shapes in earlier discourses, particularly in his predictions of the judgments to come. The Princes, nobility and towns, so he declared, must put their foot down and prevent the shameful abuses of Rome: "If we mean to fight against the Turks let us begin at home where they are worst; if we do right in hanging thieves and beheading robbers, why then do we let Roman avarice go scot free, when all the time it is the biggest thief and robber there ever has been or will ever be upon the earth." Whoever comes from Rome bringing in his pocket a collation to a benefice ought to be warned either "to desist, or else to jump into the Rhine or the nearest pond, and give the Roman Brief—letter, seals and all, a cold bath."[5] Not without a shudder can one read the description in his "Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft," written in his last days, of the kinds of death best suited to the Pope and his Curia, of which the flaying and the "bath" at Ostia is only one example. (Cp. below, xxx., 2.) True enough he is careful to point out that such a death will be theirs only should they refuse to amend their ways and accept the Lutheran Evangel!

Ten years previously, in 1535, he had written to Melanchthon,

[1] *Ib.*, 26^2, p. 242, "Das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft," 1545.
[2] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 33, p. 605; Erl. ed., 48, p. 342. Expos. of John vi.–viii., 1530–1532. [3] *Ib.*, p. 341.
[4] Feb. 7, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 83 f.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, pp. 427, 428 f.; Erl. ed., 21, pp. 305 and 307. "An den christl. Adel," 1520. Cp. above p. 88 f.

who shrank from acts of violence with what appeared to Luther too great timidity: "Oh, that our most venerable Cardinals, Popes and Roman Legates had more Kings of England to put them to death!"[1] These words he penned soon after Henry VIII of England had sacrificed the lives of John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and his Chancellor, Sir Thomas More, to his sensual passions and his thirst for blood. Luther adds, of the Pope and the Curia, with the object of vindicating the sentence of death he had passed on them, "They are traitors, thieves, robbers and regular devils. . . . They are out and out miscreants to the very bottom of their hearts. May God only grant you too to see this."[2]

Fury had stood by the cradle of Luther's undertaking and under its gloomy auspices his cause continued to progress. Without repeating what has already been said, it may suffice to point out how his excitement frequently led him to take even momentous steps which he would otherwise have boggled at. Only too frankly he admitted to his friend Lang in 1519 and soon after to Spalatin, that Eck had so exasperated him that he would now shake himself loose and write and do things from which he would otherwise have refrained. His early "jest" at Rome's expense would now become a real warfare against her[3]—as though Rome was to be made to suffer for Eck and his violence. In 1521, from apprehension of his violence and out of consideration for the Court, Spalatin had kept back two of Luther's writings which the latter wished to be printed. "I shall get into a towering rage," so the author wrote to him, "and bring out much worse things on this subject afterwards if my manuscripts are lost, or you refuse to surrender them. You cannot destroy the spirit even though you destroy the lifeless paper."[4]—This incident at so early a date shows how deeply seated in him was his tendency to violence; even at the outset it was to some extent personal animus which led him to shape his action as he did. Self-esteem and the plaudits of the mob had even then begun to dim his mental vision.

The part played by the first person is great indeed in Luther's writings.

"We should all have fallen back into the state of the brute!" "Not for a thousand years has God bestowed such great graces on any bishop as on me." "I, wonderful monk that I am," have, by God's grace, overthrown the devil of Rome; "I have stamped off the heads of more than twenty factions, as though they had been worms." Count-

[1] "*Utinam haberent plures reges Angliæ, qui illos occiderent.*" Cp. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz in 16. Jahrh.," 1911, p. 17 ff.

[2] Dec., 1535, "Briefwechsel" 10, p. 275.

[3] Feb. 3, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 410; cp. to Spalatin, Feb. 7, 1519, *ib.*, p. 412.

[4] 4–9 Dec., 1521, *ib.*, 3′, p. 253: "*Exacerbabitur mihi spiritus, ut multo vehementiora deinceps in eam rem nihilominùs moliar.*"

less other such utterances are to be found in what has gone before.[1] "He," so he declares, "was surely far too learned to allow himself to be taught by the Swiss theologians"; this was one of the sayings that led the friends of the latter to speak of his "tyrannical pride."[2]

Here come the fractious Sacramentarians, he says, and want a share in my fame; they want to celebrate a "glorious victory" as though it was not from me that they got everything. This is how things turn out, "one labours and some other man takes the fruit."[3] Carlstadt comes forward and seeks to become a new doctor; "he is anxious to detract from my importance and to introduce among the people his own regulations."[4]

A character where the first person asserted itself so imperiously could not but be a disputatious one. Down to his very last years Luther's whole life was filled with strife: quarrels with the jurists; with his own theologians; with the Jews; with the Princes and rapacious nobility; with the Popish foemen and with his own colleagues and followers, even with the preachers and writers dearest to him.

Luther sought to safeguard his cause on every side, even at the cost of concessions at variance with his duty, or by grovelling subserviency to the Princes, whether he actually granted their desire,[5] or, as in the case of the bigamy of Henry VIII of England, merely threw out a suggestion.[6]

His new ethical principles should surely have been attested in his own person, above all by truthfulness. In this connection we must, however, recall to mind the observations made elsewhere. (Above, vol. iv., p. 80 ff.)

Who is the lover of truth who does not regret the advice Luther gave from the Coburg to his followers at the Diet of Augsburg, viz. to make use of cunning when the cause seemed endangered? Where does self-betterment come in if "tricks and lapses" are to form a part of his life's task, even though "with God's help" they were afterwards to

[1] Vol. iv., p. 329 ff.

[2] Oswald Myconius to Simon Grynæus, Nov. 8, 1534, in Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 665, from a MS. source: "*Doctiorem se esse, quam qui ab eiusmodi hominibus doceri velit*"; this showed his "*tyrannica superbia.*"

[3] To Amsdorf, April 14, 1545, "Briefe" ed. De Wette, 5, p. 728.

[4] To Caspar Güttel, March 30, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 326.

[5] Vol. iv., p. 13 ff.

[6] *Ib.*, p. 3 ff.

be amended ;[1] if, when treating of the most important church matters, " reservation and subterfuge (' *insidiæ* ') " are not only to be used but even to be represented as the work of Christ ? Wherever the principle holds : Against the malice of our opponents everything is lawful,[2] there, undoubtedly, the least honest will always have the upper hand. As to how far Luther thought himself justified in going in order to conceal his real intentions we may see from his letters to the Pope, particularly from the last letter he addressed to him, where the public assertion of his devotion to the Roman Church coincides with his private admission to friends that the Pope was Antichrist and that he had sworn to attack him.[3]

In his relentless polemics against the Church—where he does not hesitate to bring the most baseless of charges against both her dignitaries and her institutions—we might dismiss as not uncommon his tendency to see only what was evil, eagerly setting this in the foreground while passing over all that was good ; his eyes also served to magnify and distort the dark spots into all manner of grotesque shapes. But what tells more heavily against him is his having evolved out of his own mind a mountain of false doctrines which he foists on the Church as hers, though in reality not one of them but the very opposite was taught in and by the Church.

The Pope, he writes, for instance, in his " Vermanūg " from the Coburg, wants to " forbid marriage " and teaches that the " love of woman " is to be despised ; this is one of the abominations and plagues of Antichrist, for God created woman for the honour and help of man."[4] The state of celibacy, willingly embraced by many under the Papacy, Luther decried in the same violent writing as a " state befitting whores and knaves,"[5] and he even connects with it unmentionable abominations.

[1] Cp. our vol. ii., p. 386 : " For when once we have evaded the peril and are at peace, then we can easily atone for our tricks and lapses (' *dolos ac lapsus nostros* '), because His [God's] mercy is over us," etc., for the word *mendacia* after *dolos* see vol. iv., p. 96.

[2] See vol. iv., p. 95 : " *In cuius* [*Antichristi*] *deceptionem et nequitiam ob salutem animarum nobis omnia licere arbitramur.*"

[3] *Ib.*, p. 81 f.

[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 24², p. 388 f. Cp. our vol. iv., p. 166 ff.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 391. " Even should the Pope, the bishops, the canons and the people wish to remain in the state of celibacy, or the state of whores and knaves—and even the heathen poet admits that fornica-

He had declared "contempt of God" to be the mark of the Papal Antichrist, but, in the booklet in question, and elsewhere, we find him tirelessly charging with utter forgetfulness of God, hatred of religion, nay, complete absence of Christian faith not only the Pope and his advisers—who, none of them rose above an Epicurean faith—but all his opponents, particularly those who by their pen had damaged his doctrine. "Willingly enough would I obey the Pope and all the bishops, but they require me to deny Christ and His Gospel and to take of God a liar, therefore I prefer to attack them."[1] When, in addition to this, he tries in all seriousness to make the people believe that at Rome the Gospel and all it contained was scoffed at; that the Papists were all sceptics; that their Doctors did not even know the Ten Commandments; that their priests were quite unable to quiet any man's conscience; that the popish doctrine spelt nothing but murder, and that indeed every Papist must be a murderer, etc.,[2] one is tempted to seek for a pathological explanation of so strange a phenomenon. Such explanations will, it is true, be forthcoming in due course and will furnish grounds for a more lenient judgment. Here it may suffice to instance the terrific strength of will which dominated Luther's fiery warfare, and which at times made him see things that others, even his own followers, were absolutely unable to see. Fortunately his mad statements concerning the Papists' love of murder found little credence, any more than his repeated assurance that the Papists were at heart on his side, at any rate their leaders, writers and educated men.

He seems, however, also to believe many other monstrous things: it was his discovery, that, "in the Papacy, men sought to find salvation in Aristotle"; this belief he attempted to instil into the people in a sermon of 1528.[3] In 1542 he assured his friends in tones no less confident that the Papists had succeeded in teaching nothing but idolatry, "for every work [as taught by them] is idolatry. What they learnt was nothing but holiness-by-works. . . . Man was to perform this or that; to put on a cowl or get his head shaved; whoever did not do or believe this was damned. Yet, on the other hand, even if a man did all this they were unable to say with certainty whether thereby he would be saved. Fie, devil, what sort of doctrine was this!"[4]

The cowl and tonsure of the monks were particularly obnoxious to him. He cherished the view that he had for ever extirpated monkery; he declared that even the heads of Catholicism would not in future endure these hateful guests. To have been instrumental in preparing such a fate for the sons of the most noble-minded men, of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic, and for all

tors and whoremongers are loath to take wives—still I hope you will take pity on the poor pastors and those who have the cure of souls and allow them to marry."

[1] Cordatus, "Tageb.," p. 364. [2] Cp. vol. iv., p. 102 f.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 286.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 287.

the monks generally, who had been the trustiest supports of the faith, of the missions and of civilisation, this appears to him a triumph, which he proceeds to magnify out of all proportion the better to gloat over it.

"No greater service has ever been rendered to the bishops and pastors," so he writes in his "Vermanũg," "than that they should thus be rid of the monks; and I venture to surmise that there is hardly anyone now at Augsburg who would take the part of the monks and beg for their reinstatement. Indeed the bishops will not permit such bugs and lice again to fasten on their fur [their cappas], but are right glad that I have washed the fur so clean for them."[1]—The untruth of this is self-evident. If some few short-sighted or tepid bishops among them were willing to dispense with the monks, still this was not the general feeling towards those auxiliaries of the Church, whom Luther himself on the same page dubs the "Pope's right-hand men." But the lie was calculated to impress those who possessed influence.

Further untruths are found in this booklet: Hitherto, the monks, not the bishops, had "governed the churches"; it was merely his peaceable teaching and the power of the Word that had "destroyed" the monks; this the bishops, "backed by the might of all the kings and with all the learning of the universities at their command had not been able to do."[2] Let no one accuse him of "preaching sedition," so he goes on; he had merely "taught the people to keep the peace";[3] he would much rather have preferred to end his days in retirement; "for me there will be no better tidings than to hear that I had been removed from the office of preacher"; better and more pious heretics than the Lutherans had never before been met with; he cannot deny that there is nothing lacking in his doctrine and in that of his "followers . . . whatever their life may be."[4]

We have here a row of instances of the honesty of his polemics and of the way in which he treated with the State authorities concerning the deepest matters of the Church's life. Often enough his polemics consist solely of unwarrantable statements concerning his own pacific intentions and salutary achievements, supported by revolting untruths, misrepresentations and exaggerations tending to damage his opponents' case.

Beyond this we frequently find him having recourse to low and unworthy language, and to filthy and unmannerly abuse. (Vol. iv., p. 318 ff.)

"When they are most angry I say to the Papists," he cries in his "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," "My dear sirs,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 364.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 365. [3] *Ib.*, p. 364. [4] *Ib.*, p. 361.

leave the wall, relieve yourselves into your drawers and sling it round your neck. . . . If they do not care to accept my services, then the devil may well be thankful to them!" etc.[1] "Oh, the shameful Diet, such as has never before been held or heard of . . . an everlasting blot on the whole Empire! What will the Turk say . . . to our allowing the accursed Pope with his minions to fool and mock at us, to treat us as children, nay, as clouts and blocks, to our behaving contrary to justice and truth, nay, with such utter shamelessness in open Diet as regards their blasphemies, their shameful and Sodomitic life and doctrines?"[2] These were the words in which he described the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.

We may here recall the saying of Valentine Ickelsamer the Anabaptist. At one time he had thought of espousing Luther's cause, but "owing to the diabolical abuse" which he piled on "erring men" it was possible to regard him only "as a non-Christian." Luther wanted to overthrow his opponents simply by words "of abuse"; these "Saxon rogues of Wittenberg," "when unable to get what they want by means of a few kind words, invoke on you all the curses of the devil."

Heinrich Bullinger complains repeatedly, and quite as bitterly, of the frightful storm into which Luther's eloquence was apt to break out. It is noteworthy that he applies what he says to Luther's polemics, not merely against the Swiss, but against other opponents. "Here all men have in their hands Luther's King Harry of England, and another Harry as well, in his unsavoury Hans Worst; *item*, they have Luther's book on the Jews with its hideous letters of the Bible dropped from the posterior of the pig, which the Jews may swallow, indeed, but never read; then, again, there is Luther's filthy, swinish Schemhamphorasch, for which some small excuse might have been found had it been written by a swine-herd and not by a famous pastor of souls."[3]

"And yet most people," so Bullinger says, "even go so far as to worship the houndish, filthy eloquence of the man. Thus it comes that he goes his way and seeks to outdo himself in vituperation. . . . Many pious and learned people take scandal at his insolence, which really is beyond measure." He should have someone at his side to keep a check on him, so Bullinger tells Bucer, for instance, his friend Melanchthon, "so that Luther may not ruin a good cause with his wonted invective, his bitterness, his torrent of bad words and his ridicule."[4]

And yet Luther at this very time, in his "Warnunge," calls himself "the German Prophet" and "a faithful teacher."[5]

The following words of Erasmus contain a general censure: "You wish to be taken for a teacher of the Gospel. In that case, however, would it not better beseem you not to repel all the prudent and well-meaning by your vituperation nor to incite men

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 291; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 23.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 285=14 f.
[3] "Wahrhaffte Bekanntnuss," Bl. 9′. [4] *Ib.*
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 290; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 22.

to strife and revolt in these already troubled times?"[1]—"You snarl at me as an Epicurean. Had I been an Epicurean and lived in the time of the Apostles and heard them proclaim the Gospel with such invective, then I fear I should have remained an Epicurean. . . . Whoever is conscious of teaching a holy doctrine should not behave with insolence and delight in malicious misrepresentation."[2]—"To what class of spirits," he had already asked him, "does yours belong, if indeed it be a spirit at all? And what unevangelical way is this of inculcating the holy Gospel? Has perchance the risen Gospel done away with all the laws of public order so that now one may say and write anything against anyone? Does the freedom you are bringing back to us spell no more than this?"[3]

Kindlier Traits and Episodes

The unprejudiced reader will gladly turn his gaze from pictures such as the above to the more favourable traits in Luther's character, which, as already shown elsewhere,[4] are by no means lacking.

Whoever has the least acquaintance with his Kirchenpostille and Hauspostille will not scruple to acknowledge the good and morally elevating undercurrent which runs below his polemics and peculiar theories. For instance, his exhortations, so warm and eloquent, to give alms to the needy; his glowing praise of Holy Scripture and of the consolation its divine words bring to troubled hearts; again, his efforts to promote education and juvenile instruction; his admonitions to assist at the sermon and at Divine worship, to avoid envy, strife, avarice and gluttony, and private no less than public vice of every kind.

The many who are familiar only with this beautiful and inspiring side of his writings, and possibly of his labours, must not take it amiss if, in a work like the present, the historian is no less concerned with the opposite side of Luther's writings and whole conduct.

As a matter of fact, gentler tones often mingle with the harsher notes, while the unpleasant traits just described alter at times and tend to assume a more favourable aspect. This is occasionally true of his severity, his defiant and imperious behaviour. He not seldom, thanks to this art of his, achieved good and eminently creditable results,

[1] "Opp." 10, col. 1558. "Adv. ep. Lutheri."
[2] *Ib.*, 1555. [3] *Ib.*, 1334. "Hyperaspistes."
[4] Vol. iv., p. 228 ff.

particularly in the protection of the poor or oppressed. Many who were in dire straits were wont to apply to him in order to secure his powerful intervention with the authorities on their behalf.

During the famine of 1539, when the nobles avariciously cornered the grain, Luther made strong representations to the Elector and begged him to come to the assistance of the town. Nor, in the same year, did he hesitate to address a severe "warning" to the Electoral steward, the Knight Franz Schott of Coburg, when the town-council at his instigation was moved to take too precipitate action.[1]

Best known of all, however, was his powerful intervention in the case of a certain man whose misdeeds were the plague of the Saxon Electorate from 1534 to 1540; this was Hans Kohlhase, a Berlin merchant. He had been overreached in a matter of two horses by a certain Saxon squire of Zaschwitz, and had afterwards lost his case in the courts. In order to obtain satisfaction Kohlhase formally gave out, that he would "rob, burn, capture and hold to ransom" the Saxons until he obtained redress. Incendiary fires broke out shortly after in Wittenberg and the neighbourhood which were laid to the charge of Kohlhase's men. The Elector could think of no better plan than to suggest a settlement between the merchant, now turned robber-knight, and the heirs of the above-mentioned squire; it was then that Kohlhase appealed to Luther for advice.

Luther replied with authority and dignity, not hesitating to rebuke him for his unprincipled action. He would not escape the wrath of God if he continued to pursue his unheard-of course of private revenge, since it stands written that "Vengeance is mine"; the shameful acts of violence which had been perpetrated by his men would be put down to his account. He ought not to take the devil as his sponsor. If in spite of all peaceful efforts he failed to succeed in obtaining his due, then nothing was left but for him to submit to the Divine decree, which was always for our best, and to suffer in patience. He consoled him at the same time in a friendly way for such injury and outrage as he might have endured; nor was it wrong to seek redress, but this must be done within the right bounds.[2]

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 442.
[2] Dec. 8, 1534, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 71 ("Briefwechsel," 10,

The well-meaning letter, which does Luther credit, had unfortunately no effect.

The attempted arbitration, owing to the leniency of the Electoral agent, Hans Metzsch, ended so much to the advantage of Kohlhase that the Elector, partly owing to his strained relations with Brandenburg, refused to ratify it. Kohlhase's bands came from Brandenburg and fell upon the undefended castles and villages in the Saxon Electorate. Their raids were also to some extent connived at by the Elector of Brandenburg. They excited great terror even at Wittenberg itself owing to sudden attacks made in the vicinity of the town. New attempts to reach a settlement brought them to a standstill for a while, but soon the strange civil war—an echo of the Peasant Rising and Revolt of the Knights—broke out anew and lasted until 1539.

Luther told his friends that such things could never have taken place under the Landgrave of Hesse ; that, as the principal actor had shed blood, he would himself die a violent death. In 1539 he invited the Elector of Saxony by letter to act as the father of his country ; he should come to the assistance of his people who were at the mercy of a criminal, nor should he leave the Elector of Brandenburg a free hand if it were true that he was implicated in the business.[1]

Finally Kohlhase, after committing excesses even in Brandenburg itself, was executed at Berlin on March 22, 1540, being broken on the wheel.

On Luther's admonition to the robber, Protestant legend soon laid hold, and, even in the second half of the 16th century, we find it further embellished. There is hardly a popular history of Luther to-day which does not give the scene where Kohlhase, in disguise, knocks at Luther's door one dark night and on his reply to the question, "Art thou

p. 88 f.) ; "Briefe," 4, p. 567 ff. : "To set ourselves up as judges and ourselves to judge is assuredly wrong, and the wrath of God will not leave it unpunished." "If you desire my advice, as you write, I counsel you to accept peace, however you reach it, and rather to suffer in your goods and your honour than to involve yourself further in such an undertaking where you will have to take upon yourself all the crimes and wickedness that are committed. . . . You must consider for how much your conscience will have to answer if you knowingly bring about the destruction of so many people."

[1] Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 159. "Briefwechsel," 12, pp. 84–102 ; 13, p. 13.

Kohlhase?" is admitted by the latter, explains his quarrel in the presence of Melanchthon, Cruciger and others and is reconciled with God and his fellow-men; he then promises to abstain from violence in future as Luther and his people are willing to help him to his rights, and the romantic visit closes by the repentant sinner making his confession and receiving the Supper.

The only chronicler of the March who relates this at the date mentioned above fails to give any authority for his narrative, nor can it, as Köstlin-Kawerau points out, be assigned its place "anywhere in Kohlhase's life-story as otherwise known to us."[1] Luther's own statements concerning the affair, particularly his last ones, do not agree with such an ending; throughout he appears as the champion of outraged justice against a public offender. The not unkindly words in which Luther had answered Kohlhase's request were probably responsible for the legend, which sprang up all the easier seeing that numerous instances were known where Luther's powerful intervention had succeeded in restraining violence and in securing victory for the cause of justice against the oppressor.[2]

The Reformation of the Church and Luther's Ethics

The defenders of the ancient faith urged very strongly that the first step towards a real moral reformation of the Church was to depict the Church as she was to be in accordance with Christ's institution and the best traditions, and then, with the help of this standard, to see how far the Church of the times fell short of this ideal; in order to re-form any institution, so they argued, we must be acquainted with its primitive shape so as to be able to revert to it.

This they declared they had in vain asked of Luther, who, on the contrary, seemed bent on subverting the whole Church. They even failed to see that he had suggested any means wherewith to withstand the moral shortcomings of the age. In their eyes the radical and destructive changes on which he so vehemently insisted spelt no real improvement; the discontent with prevailing conditions which he

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 444.
[2] Cp. C. A. Burkhardt, "Der historische Hans Kohlhase," 1864.

preached to the people could not but create a wrong atmosphere ; nor could the abolishing of the Church's spiritual remedies, the slighting of her commands and the revolting treatment of the hierarchy serve the cause of prudent Church reform.

Luther himself, in his so-called " Bull and Reformation," put forth his demands for the reform of ecclesiastical conditions as they presented themselves to his mind during the days of his fiercest struggle.[1] The " Bull " does not, however, afford any positive scheme of reformation, as the title might lead one to suppose. It is made up wholly of denials and polemics, and the same is true of his later works.

According to this writing the bishops are " not merely phantoms and idols, but folk accursed in God's sight " ; they corrupt souls, and, against them, " every Christian should strive with body and substance." One should " cheerfully do to them everything that they disliked, just as though they were the devil himself." All those who now are pastors must repudiate the obedience which they gave " with the promise of chastity," seeing that this obedience was promised, not to God, but to the devil, " just as a man must repudiate a compact he has made with the devil." " This is my Bull, yea, Dr. Luther's own," etc.

In this Luther was striking out a new road. Christ and his Apostles had begun the moral reform of the world by preaching the doing of " penance, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." True enough such a preaching can never have been so popular with the masses as Luther's invitation to overthrow the Church.

Luther's " Reformation " did not, however, consist merely in the overthrow of the olden ecclesiasticism ; it also strove to counteract much that was really amiss.

His action had this to recommend it, that it threw into the full light of day the shady side of ecclesiastical life ; after all, knowledge of the evil is already a step towards its betterment. For centuries few had had the courage to point a finger at the Church's wounds so insistently as Luther ; at the ills rampant in the clergy, Church government and in the faith and morals of the people. His piercing glance saw into every corner, and, assisted by expert helpers, some of

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 140 ff.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 178 ff. In " Wyder den falsch genantten geystlichen Standt," 1522.

them formerly officials of the Curia, he laid bare every regrettable disorder, needless to say not without exaggerating everything to his heart's content. Practically, however, Luther's revelations represent what was best in the movement which professed to aim at a reform of morals. Had he not embittered with such unspeakable hate the long list of shortcomings with which he persistently confronted the olden Church, had he used it as a means of amendment and not rather as a goad whereby to excite the masses, then one might have been even more thankful to him.

It cannot be gainsaid that, particularly at the outset, ethical motives were at work in him; that he like others felt the burden of the evil, was certainly no lie.

Yet it must not be forgotten that he attacked the Pope and the Church so violently, not on account of any refusal to amend, but in order to clear a path for his subversive views of theology and for the "Evangel" which had been condemned by ecclesiastical authority. The very magnitude of the attack he led on the whole conception of the Church, in itself proves that it was no mere question of defending the rights of Christian ethics; the removal of moral disorders from Christendom was to him but a secondary concern, and, moreover, he certainly did everything he could to render impossible any ordered abolishment of abuses and any real improvement.

One may even ask whether he had any programme at all for the betterment of the Church. The question is made almost superfluous by the history of the struggle. He himself never set up before his mind any regular programme for his work, whether ecclesiastical, social or even ethical, when once he had come to see that the idealist scheme in his "An den christlichen Adel" was impossible of realisation. Hence, when he had succeeded in destroying the old order in a small portion of the Church's territory, he had perforce to begin an uncertain search after something new whereby to replace it; nothing could be more hopeless than his efforts to build up from the ruins a new Church and a new society, a new liturgy and a new canon law, and to improve the morals of the adherents of his cause. In spite of Luther's aversion to the scheme, it came about that the whole work of reformation was, by the force of circumstances, left to the secular authorities; from the Consistories down to the

school-teachers, from the Marriage Courts down to the guardians of the poor, everything came into the hands of the State. Luther had been wont to complain that the Church in olden days had drawn all secular affairs to herself. Since his day, on the other hand, everything that pertained to the Church was secularised. The actual result was a gradual alienation of secular and ecclesiastical, quite at variance with the theories embodied in the faith. In this it is impossible to see a true reformation in any moral meaning of the word, and Luther's ethics, which made all secular callings independent of the Church, failed in the event to celebrate any triumph.

The better to appreciate certain striking contrasts between the olden Church and her ratification of morality on the one hand and Luther's thought on the other, we may glance at his attitude towards canonisation and excommunication.

Canonisation and excommunication are two opposite poles of the Church's life; by the one the Church stamps her heroes with the seal of perfection and sets them up for the veneration of the faithful; by the other she excludes the unworthy from her communion, using thereto the greatest punishment at her command. Both are, to the eye of faith, powerful levers in the moral life.

Luther, however, laughed both to scorn. The ban he attacked on principle, particularly after he himself had fallen under it; in this his action differed from that of Catholic writers, many of whom had written against the ban though only to lament its abuse and its too frequent employment for the defence of the material position of the clergy.

The Pope, according to Luther, had made such a huge "mess in the Church by means of the Greater Excommunication that the swine could not get to the end with devouring it."[1] Christians, according to him, ought to be taught rather to love the ban of the Church than to fear it. We ourselves, he cries, put the Pope under the ban and declare that "the Pope and his followers are no believers."

Later on, however, he came to see better the use of ghostly penalties for unseemly conduct and made no odds in emphasising the right of the community as such to make use of exclusion as a punishment; in view of the increase of disorders he essayed repeatedly to reintroduce on his own authority a sort of ban in his Churches.[2]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 84. In the sermons on Mt. xviii.–xxiii.
[2] See xxix., 8.

As early as 1519 Luther had expressed his disapproval of the canonising of Saints by the Church, a practice which stimulated the moral efforts of the faithful by setting up an ideal and by encouraging daily worship; he added, however, that "each one was free to canonise as much as he pleased."[1] In 1524, however, he poured forth his wrath on the never-ending canonisations; as a rule they were "nothing but Popish Saints and no Christian Saints";[2] the foundations made in their honour served "merely to fatten lazy gluttons and indolent swine in the Churches"; before the Judgment Day no one could "pronounce any man holy"; Elisabeth, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Bernard and Francis, even he regarded as holy, though he would not stake his life on it, seeing there was nothing about them in Holy Scripture; "but the Pope, nay, all the angels, had not the power of setting up a new article of faith not contained in Scripture."[3]

On May 31, 1523, was canonised the venerable bishop Benno of Meissen, a contemporary of Gregory VII. Luther was incensed to the last degree at the thought of the special celebration to be held in 1524 in the town—the Duchy being still Catholic—in honour of the new Saint. He accordingly published his "Against the new idol and olden devil about to be set up at Meyssen."[4] His use of the term "devil" in the title he vindicates as follows on the very first page: Now, that, "by the grace of God, the Gospel has again arisen and shines brightly," "Satan incarnate" is avenging himself "by means of such foolery" and is causing himself to be worshipped with great pomp under the name of Benno. It was not in his power to prevent Duke George setting up the relics at Meissen and erecting an artistic and costly altar in their honour. The only result of Luther's attack was to increase the devotion of clergy and people, who confidently invoked the saintly bishop's protection against the inroads of apostasy. The attack also led Catholic writers in the Duchy to publish some bitter rejoinders. The rudeness of their titles bears witness to their indignation. "Against the Wittenberg idol Martin Luther" was the title of the pamphlet of Augustine Alveld, a Franciscan Guardian; the work of Paul Bachmann, Abbot of Alte Zelle, was entitled "Against the fiercely snorting wild-boar Luther," and that of Hieronymus Emser, "Reply to Luther's slanderous book." The last writer was to some extent involved in the matter of the canonisation through having published the Legend of the famous Bishop. This he had done rather uncritically and without testing his authorities, and for this reason had been read a severe lesson by Luther.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 651 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 2, p. 511. In the "Defensio contra Eccii iudicium."

[2] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 15, p. 183; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 251. "Widder den newen Abgott und allten Teuffel der zu Meyssen sol erhaben werden."

[3] *Ib.*, p. 194 f.=264.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 175=249.

Luther's opposition to this canonisation was, however, by no means dictated by historical considerations but by his hatred of all veneration of the Saints and by his aversion to the ideal of Christian self-denial, submissive obedience to the Church and Catholic activity of which the canonised Saints are models. He himself makes it easy to answer the question whether it was zeal for the moral reformation of the Church which drove him to assail canonisation and the veneration of the Saints; nowhere else is his attempt to destroy the sublime ideal of Christian life which he failed to understand and to drag down to the gutter all that was highest so clearly apparent as here. The real Saints, so he declared, were his Wittenbergers. Striving after great holiness on the part of the individual merely tended to derogate from Christ's work; the Evangelical Counsels fostered only a mistaken desertion of the world.

Judging others by his own standard, he attempted to drag down the Saints of the past to the level of mediocrity. Real Saints must be "good, lusty sinners who do not blush to insert in the Our Father the 'forgive us our trespasses.'" It was "consoling" to him to hear, that the Apostles, too, even after they had received the Holy Ghost, had at times been shaky in their faith, and "very consoling indeed" that the Saints of both Old and New Covenant "had fallen into great sins"; only thus, so he fancies, do we learn to know the "Kingdom of Christ," viz. the forgiveness of sins. Even Abraham, agreeably with Luther's interpretation of Josue xxiv. 2, was represented to have worshipped idols, in order that Luther might be able to instance his conversion and say: Believe like him and you will be as holy as he.[1]

The Reformation in the Duchy of Saxony considered as typical

In 1539, after the death of Duke George, at Luther's instance, the protestantising of the duchy of Saxony was undertaken with unseemly haste; to this end Henry, the new sovereign, ordered a Visitation on the lines of that held in the Saxon Electorate and to be carried out by

[1] Cp. vol. iii., p. 191 f.; 211 f. and Joh. Wieser in "Luther und Ignatius von Loyola" ("Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.," 7 (1883) and 8 (1884), particularly 8, p. 365 ff.).

preachers placed at his disposal by the Elector. Jonas and Spalatin now became the visitors for Meissen. Before this, on the occasion of the canonisation of St. Benno, Spalatin, in a letter to Luther, had treated the canonisation as a laughing matter. On July 14, the visitors, alleging the authority of the Duke, summoned the Cathedral Chapter at Meissen to remove the sepulchre of St. Benno. On this being met by a refusal armed men were sent to the Cathedral the following night. " 'They broke into fragments the richly ornamented sepulchre of the Saint, together with the altar,' to quote the words of the bishop's report to the Emperor, 'they decapitated a wooden statue of St. Benno and stuck it up outside as a butt for ridicule.' "[1]

Luther, for his part, in a letter to Jonas of August 14 of the same year, has his little joke about the visitors' undoing of the canonisation of Benno. " You have unsainted Benno and have shown no fear of Cochlæus, Schmid, nor of the Nausei and Sadoleti, who teach the contrary. They are indignant with you, ultra-sensitive men that they are, knowing so little of grammar and so much less of theology."[2]

Nor did the progress of the overthrow of the Church throughout the Duchy bear the least stamp of moral reform. The very violence used forbids our applying such a term to the work. The Catholic worship at the Cathedral was at once abolished and replaced by Lutheran services and preaching. The priests were driven into exile, the bishop alone being permitted to carry on " his godless papistical abominations and practices openly in his own residence " (the Castle of Stolpen). At the demand of the Wittenbergers the professors at Leipzig University who refused to conform to the Lutheran doctrine were dismissed. Melanchthon insisted, that, if they refused to hold their tongues, they must be driven out of the land as " blasphemers." The new preachers publicly abused the friends, clerical and lay, of the late Duke to such an extent that the Estates were moved to make a formal complaint. Churches and monasteries were plundered and the sacred vessels melted down.[3]

Maurice, the son of Duke Henry, who succeeded in 1541,

[1] Janssen, " Hist. of the German People " (Engl. Trans.), vi., p. 54.
[2] " Briefwechsel," 12, p. 231.
[3] Cp. Janssen, *ib.*

showed himself even more violent and relentless in extirpating the olden system.

The profoundly immoral character of this reformation, the interference with the people's freedom of conscience, the destruction of religious traditions which the peaceable inhabitants had received a thousand years before from holy missionaries and bishops, merely on the strength of the new doctrines of a man who claimed to have a better Gospel —all this was expressly sanctioned and supported by Luther.

He wrote in a memorandum on the proceedings: "There is not much room here for discussion. If my gracious Duke Henry wishes to have the Evangel, then His Highness must abolish idolatry, or not afford it protection . . . otherwise the wrath of heaven will be too great." As a "sovereign appointed by God" the ruler "owed it to Him to put down such horrible, blasphemous idolatry by every means in his power." This was nothing more than "defending Christ and damning the devil"; an example had been given by the "former kings of Juda and Israel," who had abolished "Baal and all his idolatry," and later by Constantine, Theodosius and Gratian. For it was as much the duty of princes and lords as of other people to serve God and the Lord Christ to the utmost of their power. Away, therefore, with the abbots and bishops "since they are determined to remain blasphemers . . . they are blind leaders of the blind; God's wrath has come upon them; hence we must help in the matter as much as we can."[1]

Yet the Christian emperors here appealed to could have furnished Luther with an example of forbearance towards heathen Rome and its religious works of art which might well have shamed him. He did not know that at Rome the defacing and damaging of temples, altars or statues was most strictly forbidden, and that, for instance, Pope Damasus (†384) had been formally assured by the city-prefect that never had a Christian Roman appeared before his tribunal on such a charge.[2] Elsewhere, however, such acts of violence were not unknown.

Luther's spirit of persecution was quite different from the spirit which animated those Roman emperors who came over to Christianity. It was their desire to hasten the end of an outworn religion of superstition, immorality and idolatry. With them it was a question of defending and furthering a religion sent from heaven to renew the world and which had convincingly proved the divinity of its mission by miracles, by the blood of martyrs and by the striking holiness of so many thousands of confessors.

[1] July, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 188.

[2] Cp. my "Hist. of Rome and the Popes in the Middle Ages" (Engl. Trans., i., pp. 9–26).

It was against the faithful adherents of this very religion that, on the pretext of the outward corruption under which it groaned, Luther perpetrated so many acts of violence regardless of the testimony of a thousand years of beneficent labours. His ingratitude towards the achievements of the olden Church in the education of the nations, his deliberate ignoring of the great qualities which distinguished her and in his day could still have enabled her to carry out her own moral regeneration from within, are incompatible with his having been a true moral reformer.

The Aims of the Reformation and the Currents of the Age

Looking at the state of the case from the standpoint of the olden Catholic Church a closer historical examination shows that what she needed above all was a strengthening of her interior organisation.[1]

In view of the tendency to split up into separate States, in view of the decay of that outward bond of the nations under the Empire which had once been her stay, and of the rise of all sorts of new elements of culture requiring to be exploited for the glory of God and the spiritual betterment of mankind, a consolidation of the Church's structure was essential. The Primacy indeed was there, exercised its functions and was recognised, but what was needed was a more direct recognition of a purified Papacy. The bond of unity between the nations within the Church needed to be more clearly put in evidence. This could best be done by allowing the significance of a voluntary submission to the authority appointed by God, and of the Primacy, to sink more deeply into the consciousness of Christendom. This was all the more called for, now that the traditional devotion to Rome had suffered so much owing to the great Schism of the West, to the reforming Councils and the prevalence of Gallican ideas, and that the splendour of the Papacy seemed now on the wane. The excessive concern of the Popes in politics and the struggle they had waged in Italy in the effort to establish themselves more securely had by no means contributed to increase respect for the power of the keys in its own peculiar domain, viz. the spiritual.

[1] In what follows we have drawn largely on J. Wieser (see above, p. 124, n. 1).

Thus any reformer seeking to improve the Church's condition had necessarily to face this task first of all.—Many other moral requirements arising out of the then state of society had, however, also to be borne in mind.

It was necessary to counteract, by laying stress on what had been handed down, the false subjectivism and universal scepticism which the schools of philosophy had let loose on the world; also to oppose the cynicism, lack of discipline and love of destruction which characterised Humanism, by infusing into education the true spirit of the Church. Both these tasks could, however, be accomplished only by men filled with respect for tradition who while on the one hand broad-mindedly accepting the new learning, i.e. without questioning or distrusting reason and its rights, on the other hand possessed the power and the will to spiritualise the new culture. The disruptive tendency of the nations, the counterpart in international politics of the prevalent individualism, required to be corrected by laying stress on the underlying common ground. The undreamt-of enlargement of the Church through the discovery of new lands had to be met by organisations, the members of which were filled with love of self-denial and zeal for souls. At the same time the materialism, which was a consequence of the great increase of wealth brought from foreign lands, had to be checked. To oppose the alarming growth of Turkish power it was necessary to preach self-sacrifice, manly courage and above all Christian unity amongst those in power, amongst those who in former times had sallied forth against the East strong in the feeling of being one family in the faith. A still worse foe to Christian society was to be found in moral discouragement and exhaustion; there was need of a new spirit to awaken the motive force of religious life and to stir men to a more active use of the means of grace.

If we compare the moral aims and motives which inspired Luther's reformation, with the great needs of the times, as just described, we cannot fail to see how far short he fell of the requirements.

Most of the aims indicated were quite strange to him. Judging from the standpoint of the olden Church, he frequently sought the very opposite of what was required. Some few instances may be cited.

So little did Luther's reformation tend to realise the

sublime moral principle of the union and comradeship of the nations, that, on the contrary, he encouraged nationalism and separatist tendencies even in Church matters. Where his idea of a National Church prevailed, there the strongest bond of union disappeared completely.[1] The more the authority of the Empire was subverted by the separatists, by religious Leagues and violent inroads of princes and sovereign towns within the Empire, the more the idea of unity, which at one time had been so great a power for good, had to suffer. He complained that the nations and races were as unfriendly to each other as devils. But for him, the rude Saxon, to abuse all who dwelt outside his borders in the most unmeasured terms, and to pour out the vials of his wrath and vituperation on the Latin nations because they were Catholic could hardly be regarded as conducive to better harmony. When he persistently declared in his writings and sermons that the real Turks were to be found at home, or when he fanned the flames of fraternal hatred against the Papists within the Fatherland, such action could scarcely promote a more effectual resistance to the danger looming in the East. The Bible, according to him, was to serve as the means of uniting the people of God. He flung it amongst the people at a time when everything was seething with excitement; yet he himself, in spite of all his praise of Bible study, was moved to execrate the results. It seemed, so he declared, as though it had been done merely "in order that each one might bore a hole where his snout happened to be."[2]

As to subjectivism, the dominant evil of the age, he himself carried it to its furthest limits, relentlessly condemning everywhere whatever did not appeal to him and exalting his personal views and feelings into a regular law; subjectivism pervades and spoils his whole theology, and, in the domain of ethics, puts both personality and conscience on a new and very questionable basis.[3] The subjective principle as used by him and exalted into an axiom, might be invoked equally by any religious faction for its own ends. We need only recall Luther's theory of the lonely isolation of the individual in the matter of faith.

[1] Wieser rightly points out that Luther claimed above all to be a "National Prophet"; he was fond of saying that he had brought the Gospel "to the Saxons," or "to the Germans." *Ib.*, 8, pp. 143 f., 356.

[2] *Ib.*, 8, p. 352. [3] Above, pp. 3 ff. and 66 ff.

Again, if that transition period between mediæval and modern times was suffering from moral and religious exhaustion and was inclined to be pessimistic concerning spiritual goods, and if, for its moral reform, what was needed was a leader deeply imbued with faith in revelation, able by the very strength of his faith to arouse the world of his day, and to inspire the lame and timid with enthusiasm and delight in the ancient treasures of religion—then, again, one is forced to ask whether such a man as Luther, even apart from his new and erroneous doctrines, had the requisite strong and overbearing devotion to supernatural truths ? Is it not Luther who speaks so often of the weakness of his faith, of his doubts and his inward trials, and who, in order to reassure himself, declares that everyone, even the Apostles, the martyrs and the saints, were acquainted with the like ?

Not only did he not fight against pessimism, but, as the years went by, he even built it into a truly burdensome system. Towards the end of his life, owing both to his theories and to his experiences, he became a living embodiment of dejection, constituting himself its eloquent advocate. His view of the history of the kingdom of Christ was the gloomiest imaginable. Everywhere he saw the power of the devil predominant throughout the whole course of the world's history.

Not only is everything in the world outside of Christ Satanic, but even the ancient people of God, chosen with a view to the coming Redeemer, according to Luther, " raged and stormed " against the faith. But " the fury of the Jews " was exceeded by the " malice " which began to insinuate itself into the first Church not very long after its foundation. What the Jews did was " but a joke and mere child's play " compared with the corruption of the Christian religion by means of " human ordinances, councils and Papistry." Hardly had the light enkindled by Christ begun to shine before it gradually flickered out, until lighted again by Luther. In the East prevailed the rule of the Turks, those devils incarnate, whilst the West groaned under the Papacy, which far exceeds even the Islam in devilry.[1]

His pessimism sees the origin of the corruption in the Church in the fact, that, already in the first centuries, " the devil had broken into Holy Scripture and made such a disturbance as to give rise to many heresies." To counteract these the Christians surrendered themselves to human ordinances ; " they knew of

[1] Cp. Wieser, *ib.*, 8, p. 353.

no other way out of the difficulty than to set up a multitude of Councils side by side with Scripture." "In short, the devil is too clever and powerful for us; everywhere he is an obstacle and a hindrance. If we go to Scripture, he arouses so much dissension and strife that we grow sick of the Word and afraid to trust to it. Yet if we rely on human councils and counsels, we lose Scripture altogether and become the devil's own, body and soul." This evil was not solely due to setting up human ordinances in the place of Scripture, but also to the preference shown in theory to works which arose when people saw, that "works or deeds did not follow" from the preaching of the Apostles, "as they should have done." "Hence the new disciples set to work to improve upon the Master's building and proceeded to confuse two different things, viz. works and faith. This scandal has been a hindrance to the new doctrine of faith from the beginning even to the present day."

From all this one would rather gather that the fault lay more in the nature of Christianity than in the devil.

Luther's pessimistic tendency also expresses itself in the conviction, that it was the "gruesome, frightful and boundless anger of God" that was the cause of the desolation of Christendom during so many centuries, though he assigns no reason for such anger on the part of God.

His gloomy view of the world, exercising an increasing domination over him, led him to take refuge in fatalistic grounds for consolation, which, according to his wont, he even attributed to Christ who had inspired him with them. Haunted by his diabolical visions he finally became more deeply imbued with pessimism than any present-day representative of the pessimistic philosophy.

"Here you are living," so he writes to one of his friends, "in the devil's own den of murderers, surrounded by dragons and serpents. Of two things one must happen; either the people become devils to you, or you yourself become a devil."[1]

Formerly he had looked forward with some courage and confidence to the possibility of a change. But even his courage, particularly at critical junctures, for instance, at the Coburg and during the Diet of Augsburg, more resembled the wanton rashness of a man who seeks to set his own fears at defiance. At any rate his peculiar form of courage in faith was not calculated to give a fresh stimulus, amid the general relaxation and exhaustion, to religious enthusiasm and the spirit of cheerful self-sacrifice for the highest aims of human life. On the other hand, his success was largely due to the discouragement so widely prevalent. We meet with a mournful echo of this discouragement in the sayings

[1] Wieser, *ib.*, 8, p. 387.

of certain contemporary Princes of the Church, who seem to have given up everything for lost. Many who had been surprised and overwhelmed by the sudden bursting of the storm were victims of this depression.

Luther not only failed to direct the unfavourable tendencies of the age into better channels, but even to some extent allowed himself to be carried away by them.

Even so strong a man as he, was keenly affected by the spirit of the age. In some respects it is true his work exercised a lasting effect on the prevalent currents, but in others he allowed his work to be dominated by the spirit then abroad. To the nominalistic school of Occam he owed not only certain of his doctrines but also his disputatious and subversive ways, and his method of ignoring the general connection between the truths of faith and of making the most of the grounds for doubt. Pseudo-mystic influences explain both his subjectivism and those quietistic principles, traces of which are long met with in his writings. Humanism increased his aversion to the old-time scholasticism, his animosity to the principles of authority and tradition, his contempt for all things mediæval, his lack of appreciation for, and unfairness to, the religious orders no less than the paradox and arrogance of his language. A strain of coarse materialism runs through the Renaissance. In Luther, says Paulsen, " we are reminded of the Renaissance by a certain coarse naturalism with which the new Evangel is spiced, and which, in his attacks on celibacy and the religious life, occasionally leads Luther to speak as though to abstain from carnal works was to rebel against God's Will and command."[1] To the tendency of the Princes to exalt themselves Luther yielded, even at the expense of the liberties and well-being of the people, simply because he stood in need of the rulers' support. The spirit of revolt against the hierarchy which was seething amongst the masses and even among many of the theologians, and which the disorders censured in the *Gravamina* of the various Diets had brought almost to the point of explosion, carried Luther away; even in those writings which contemporaries and aftercomers were to praise as his greatest achievement and, in fact, in his whole undertaking in so far

[1] " Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichts," 1^2, 1896, p. 174.

as it involved separation from Rome, he was simply following the trend of his time.

8. The Church Apart of the True Believers

Luther's sad experiences in establishing a new Church led him for several years to cherish a strange idea ; his then intention was to unite the true believers into a special band and to restrict the preaching of the Gospel to these small congregations which would then represent the real Church.

This idea of his of gathering together the true Christians has already been referred to cursorily elsewhere,[1] but it is of such importance that it may well be dealt with somewhat more in detail.

Luther's Theory of the Church Apart prior to 1526

On the whole the idea which Luther, previous to 1526, expressed over and over again as clearly as could be desired and never rejected later, viz. of uniting certain chosen Christians—the true believers—in a " congregation apart " and of regarding the remainder, i.e. the ordinary members of the flock which followed him, or popular Church as it was termed, as a mere lump still to be kneaded, gives us a deep insight into the development which his conception of the Church underwent and into his opinion of the position of his congregations generally. The idea was an outcome more of circumstances than of reflection, more a fanciful expedient than a consequence of his theories ; thus it was that it suffered shipwreck on the outward conditions which soon showed that the plan was impossible of realisation. It really originated in the moral disorders rampant in the new Church, particularly at Wittenberg. So few of those who followed him allowed their hearts to be touched by the Evangel, and yet all, none the less, claimed not merely to be called Evangelicals but even to share in the Supper. Luther saw that this state of things was compromising the good name of the work he had started.

After the refusal of the Princes and nobles to listen to his appeal to amend the state of Christendom, he determined to take his stand on the congregational principle. He fondly

[1] See above, vol. iii., p. 25 ff.

expected that, thanks to the supposed inward power of reform in the new communities, all his proposals would soon be put into execution, the old system of Church government swept away and a new order established more in accordance with his views. Hence in the writing to the magistrates and congregation of Prague, "*De instituendis ministris ecclesiæ*" (Nov., 1523), which, without delay, he caused to be translated into German,[1] he strove to show, how, everywhere, the new Church system was to be established from top to bottom by the selection of pastors by members of the congregation filled with faith ("*iis qui credunt, hæc scribimus*").[2] According to this writing, the Visitors and Archbishop yet to be chosen by the zealous clergy, were to live only for the sake of the pastors and the congregations, whom they had to better by means of the Word. The faithful congregations "will indeed be weak and sinful"—Luther had no hope of setting up a Church of the perfect—but, "seeing they have the Word, they are at least not ungodly; they sin indeed, but, far from denying, they confess the Word."[3] "Luther's optimism," says Paul Drews, "saw already whole parishes converted into congregations of real Christians, realising anew the true Church of the Apostolic ideal."[4]

In the same year, 1523, on Maundy Thursday, he for the first time spoke publicly, in a sermon delivered at Wittenberg, of the plan he had long cherished of segregating the "believing" Christians from the common herd. This was when publishing a new rule on the receiving of the Supper, making Penance, or at least a general confession of sin, a condition of reception. In future all were no longer to be allowed to approach the Sacrament indiscriminately, but only those who were true Christians; hence communion was to be preceded by an examination in faith, i.e. by the asking of certain questions on the subject. The five questions, and the answers, which were printed with a preface by Bugenhagen, practically constituted an assurance of a sort to the dispensers of the Sacrament that the communicants

[1] Vol. ii., p. 111. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 169 ff.; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 494 *sqq.*

[2] "Werke," *ib.*, p. 192=p. 528. [3] *Ib.*, p. 194=532.

[4] "Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" ("Zeitschr. f. Theol. und Kirche," 1908, Suppl., p. 38.) The striking new works of Hermelink, K. Müller, etc., have already been referred to elsewhere. In addition we must mention K. Holl, "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment" ("Zeitschr. f. Theol. und Kirche," 1911, Suppl.), where the writer takes a view of the much-discussed question different from that of K. Müller.

approached from religious motives and that they received the Body and Blood of Christ as a sign of the forgiveness of their sins.

"It must be a faith," says Luther in this sermon, "which God works in you, and you must know and feel that God is working this in you." But did it come to a "serious self-examination you would soon see how few are Christians and how few there would be who would go to the Sacrament. But it might be arranged and brought about, as I greatly wish, for those in every place who really believe to be set apart and distinguished from the others. I should like to have done this long ago, but it was not feasible; for it has not been sufficiently preached and urged as yet." Meanwhile, instead of "separating" the true believers (later on he speaks of private sermons for them to be preached in the Augustinian minster) he will still address his discourse to all, even though it be not possible to know "who is really touched by it," i.e. who really accepts the Gospel in faith; but it was thus that Christ and the Apostles had preached, "to the masses, to everyone; . . . whoever can pick it up, let him do so. . . . But the Sacrament ought not thus to be scattered broadcast amongst the people in the way the Pope did."[1]

In the "*Formula missæ*" from about the beginning of Dec., 1523, he again speaks of the examination of the communicants, and adds that it was enough that this should take place once a year, while, in the case of educated people, it might well be omitted altogether; the examination by the "bishop" (i.e. the pastor) must however extend also to the "life and conduct" of the communicants. "If he sees a man addicted to fornication, adultery, drunkenness, gambling, usury, cursing or any other open vice he is to exclude him from the Supper unless he has given proof of amendment." Moreover, those admitted to the Sacrament are to be assigned a special place at the altar in order that they may be seen by all and their moral conduct more easily judged of all. He would, however, lay down no commands on such matters, but leave everything, as was his wont, to the good will of free Christian men.[2]

The introduction of the innovation was, moreover, to depend entirely on the consent of the congregation, agreeably with his theory of their rights. This he said in a sermon of Dec. 6, 1523.[3] It was probably in that same month that the plan was tried.

These preliminary attempts at the formation of an assembly of true Christians were no more crowned with success than his plan for the relief of the poor by means of

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 484 f.; Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 205 f. Cp. *ib.*, p. 481 = 201 f., and Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 82 f.

[2] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 12, p. 215 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, 13. On the "*Formula missæ*," see below, xxix., 9.

[3] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 11, p. 210. The Latin version reads: "*Si Dominus dederit in cor vestrum, ut simul probetis*," etc.

the so-called common box, or his efforts to establish a new system of penalties. Hence he declared, that, owing to the Wittenbergers' want of preparation, he was obliged to put off its execution "until our Lord God forms some Christians." For the time being "we have not got the necessary persons." In 1524 he told them that "neither charity nor the Gospel could make any headway amongst them."[1] In the Wittenberg congregation he could "not yet discern a truly Christian one."[2] He nevertheless permitted the whole congregation to take its share, when, in the autumn of 1523, the town-council appointed Bugenhagen to the office of parish-priest; this he did agreeably with his ideas concerning the rights of the congregation.

Meanwhile, however, the ideal of a whole parish of true believers seemed about to be realised elsewhere. Full of apparent zeal for the new Evangel, the magistrates and burghers of Leisnig on the Mulde drafted a scheme for a "common box" and begged Luther to send them something confirming their right to appoint a minister—the town having refused to accept the lawfully presented Catholic priest—and also a reformed order for Divine worship. The instructive incident has already been mentioned.[3]

Luther seized eagerly on the opportunity of calling into existence at Leisnig a community which might in turn prove a model elsewhere. From the establishment of such congregations he believed there would result a system of new Churches independent indeed, though supported by the authorities, which might then take the place of the Papal Church now thought on the point of expiry. The idealistic dreams with which, as his writings show, the proceedings at Leisnig filled his mind would seem to have been responsible both for his project for Wittenberg and for his letter to the Bohemians previously referred to. The fact that they belonged to the same time is at any rate a remarkable coincidence.

He promised the town-council of Leisnig (Jan. 29, 1523) that he would have their scheme for the establishment of a common fund printed,[4] and this he did shortly after, adding an introduction of his own.[5]

[1] *Ib.*, 12, p. 693; cp. 697. On the Wittenberg Poor Box see below, vol. vi. xxxv., 4.
[2] P. Drews, p. 55.
[3] Vol. ii., p. 113; cp. vol. iii., p. 27.
[4] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 70.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 11 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 106 ff.

In the introduction he expresses his conviction that true Christianity, the right belief such as he desiderated, had taken up its abode with them. For had they not made known their willingness to enforce strict discipline at Leisnig? "By God's grace," he tells them, "you are yourselves enriched by God," hence you have "no need of my small powers." Still, he was far from loath to draw up for them and for others, too, first the writing which appeared in print in 1523 (possibly at the beginning of March), "Von Ordenung Gottes Dienst ynn der Gemeyne,"[1] and then, about Easter, 1523, another booklet destined to become particularly famous and to which we have already frequently referred, "Das eyn Christliche Versamlung odder Gemeyne Recht und Macht habe, alle Lere zu urteylen," etc.[2]

In the first, speaking of public worship "to real, heartfelt, holy Christians," he says the model must surely be sought in the "apostolic age"; at least the clergy and the scholars, if not the whole congregation, were to assemble daily, and on Sundays all were to meet; then follow his counsels—he took care to lay down no actual rules—for the details of public worship, where the Word and the awakening of faith were to be the chief thing. These matters the congregation were to arrange on their own authority.

The second booklet lays it down that it is the congregation and not the bishops, the learned or the councils who have the right and duty of judging of the preacher and of choosing a true preacher to replace him who does not proclaim the Word of God aright—needless to say, regardless of the rights of church patronage. A minority of true "Christians" is at liberty to reject the parish priest and appoint a new one of the right kind, whom it then becomes their duty to support. Even "the best preachers" might not be appointed by the bishops or patrons "without the consent, choice and call of the congregation."—There can be no doubt, that, if every congregation acted as was here proposed, this would have spelt the doom of the old church system. This too was what Luther's vivid fancy anticipated from the power of that Word which never returns empty-handed, though he preferred simply to ignore the huge inner difficulties which the proposal involved. The tidings that new congregations and town-councils were joining his cause strengthened him in his belief. His statements then, concerning the near overthrow of the Papacy by the mere breath of Christ's mouth, are in part to be explained by this frame of mind.

At Leisnig, however, events did not in the least justify his sanguine expectations.

The citizens succeeded in making an end of their irksome dependence on the neighbouring Cistercian monastery, and

[1] *Ib.*, p. 35 ff=153 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, 11, p. 408 ff.=22, p. 141 ff. "Ordenũg eyns gemeynen Kastens," 1523. On the date cp. Drews, p. 43.

the town-council promptly sequestrated all the belongings and foundations of the Church; it then became apparent, however, that, particularly on the side of the council, the prevalent feeling was anything but evangelical; the councillors, for instance, refused to co-operate in the establishment of a common poor-box or to apply to this object the endowments it had appropriated. Grave dissensions soon ensued and Luther sought in vain the assistance of the Elector. Of any further progress of the new religious-community ideal we hear nothing. The fact is, the fate at Leisnig of the model congregation and "common fund" scheme was a great disappointment to Luther. Elsewhere, too, attempts at establishing a common poor-box were no less unsuccessful. Of these, however, we shall treat later.[1]

Luther's next detailed statements concerning the "assembly of true Christians" are met in 1525. Towards the end of that year Caspar Schwenckfeld, a representative of the innovations in Silesia, visited him, and various theological discussions took place in the presence of Bugenhagen and Jonas,[2] of which Schwenckfeld took notes which have come down to us.[3] With the help of what Luther said then, supplemented by some later explanations, the history of the remarkable plan can be followed further.

In the discussion then held with Schwenckfeld the latter voiced his conviction, that true Christians must be separated from the false, "otherwise there was no hope" of improvement; excommunication, too, must "ever go hand in hand with the Gospel," otherwise "the longer matters went on the worse they would get, for it was easy to see the trend throughout the world; every man wanted to be Evangelical and to boast of the name of Christ. To this he [Luther] replied: it was very painful to him that no one showed any sign of amendment"; he had, however, already taken steps concerning the separation of the true believers and had announced "publicly in his sermons" his intention of keeping a "register of Christians" and of having a watch set over their conduct, also "of preaching to them in the monastery" while a "curate preached to the others in the parish."[4]

[1] See below, vol. vi., xxxv., 4. [2] Above, p. 78 ff.

[3] "Schwenckfelds Epistolar," 2, 2, 1570, p. 39 ff. Cp. K. Ecke, "Schwenckfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Reformation," 1911, p. 101, where the words of the Epistolar, pp. 24 and 39, are given, showing that Schwenckfeld "noted down the whole affair from beginning to end at the inn while it was still fresh in his memory."

[4] Of these steps and the sermon nothing is known.

It was a disgrace, remarked Luther, how, without such helps, everything went to rack and ruin. Not even half a gulden had he been able to obtain for the poor.

Concerning the ban, however, "he refused to give a reply" even when repeatedly pressed by Schwenckfeld; he merely said: "Yes, dear Caspar, true Christians are not yet so plentiful; I should even be glad to see two of them together; for I do not feel even myself to be one." And there the matter rested.[1]

Hence, even then, he still had a quite definite intention of forming such a congregation of true believers at Wittenberg.[2]

During the last months of 1525 Luther concluded a writing entitled "Deudsche Messe und Ordnung Gottis Diensts," which was published in 1526, in which he speaks at length of the strange scheme which was ever before his mind. Its reaction on his plans for Mass and Divine worship may here be passed over.[3] What more nearly concerns us now is the distinction he makes between those present at Divine worship. If the new Mass, so he says, "is held publicly in the churches before all the people" many are present "who as yet neither believe nor are Christians." In the popular Church, such as it yet is, "there is no ordered or clearly cut assembly where the Christians can be ruled in accordance with the Gospel"; to them worship is merely "a public incentive to faith and Christianity." It would be a different matter if we had the true Christians assembled together, "with their names registered and meeting together in some house or other," where prayer, reading, and the receiving of the Sacrament would be assiduously practised, general almsgiving imposed and "penalties, correction, expulsion or the ban made use of according to the law of Christ." But here again we find him complaining: "I have not yet the necessary number of people for this, nor do I see many who are desirous of trying it." "Hence until Christians take the Word seriously, find their own legs and persevere," the carrying out of the plan must be delayed. Nor did he wish, so he says, to set up "anything new in Christendom." As he put it in a previous sermon: "It is perfectly true that I am certain I have and preach the Word, and am called; yet I hesitate to lay down any rules."[4]

This hesitation cannot be explained merely by the anxiety to which he himself refers incidentally lest commands should arouse the spirit of opposition and give rise to "factions,"[5] for the absence of authority was evident;

[1] "Epistolar," *ib.*, pp. 39, 43.

[2] "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 13, p. 552 ff.

[3] See below, xxix., 9. The writing is reprinted in "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 70 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 227 ff.

[4] Sermon of Dec. 6, 1523, *ib.*, Weim. ed., 11, p. 210.

[5] In the "Deudsche Messe," Weim. ed., 19, p. 75; Erl. ed., 22, p. 231: "In order that no faction may arise as though I had done it of my own initiative."

it must also have sprung from the author's own sense of the indefiniteness of the plan. His pious wish to establish an organisation on the apostolic model was not conspicuous for practical insight, however great the stress Luther laid on the passages he regarded as authoritative (2 Cor. ix., 1 Cor. xiv., Mt. xviii. 2, and Acts vi.). "This much is clear," rightly remarks Drews, "that Luther was uncertain and wavered in the details of his plan. He had but little bent to sketch out organisations even in his head; to this he did not feel himself called."[1]

Others, not alone from the ranks of such as inclined to fanatism, were also to some extent to blame for the persistence with which he continued to revert to this pet idea. Nicholas Hausmann, pastor of Zwickau, and an intimate friend, approached him at the end of 1526 on the subject of the ban, which he regarded as indispensable for the cause of order. On Jan. 10, 1527, Luther replied, referring him to the Visitation which the Elector had promised to have held. "When the Churches have been constituted ('*constitutis ecclesiis*') by it, then we shall be able to try excommunication. What can you hope to effect so long as everything is in such disorder?"[2]

Here we reach a fresh stage in the efforts to establish a new system of Church organisation. Luther waited in vain for the birth of the ideal community. Everything remained "in disorder."[3] The intervention of the State introduced in the Visitation was, however, soon to establish an organisation and thus to improve discipline.

The Church Apart replaced by the Popular Church Supported by the State

Luther hoped much from the Visitation of 1527; it was not merely to constitute parishes but also to serve the cause of the "assembly of Christians" and of discipline; the segregation of the true believers was to be effected within the parishes, at least

[1] "Entsprach des Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" p. 65. Drews adds: "He was afraid of doing something contrary to God's will." That Luther had not thought out the matter plainly is also stated by K. Müller ("Luther und Karlstadt," p. 121).

[2] "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 10.

[3] As late as June 26, 1533 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 317), he wrote: "*In hoc sæculo tam turbido et nondum satis pro recipienda disciplina idoneo non ausim consulere tam subitam innovationem.*" Cp. p. 142, below.

when the parishes were not prepared to go over as a whole to the true Church, as, for instance, Leisnig had once promised to do. Luther again wrote, on March 29, 1527, to Hausmann, the zealous Zwickau Evangelical: "We hope that it [the 'assembly of Christians'] will come about through the Visitation." Then, he fancies, "Christians and non-Christians would no longer be found side by side" as at the ordinary gatherings in church; but, once they were "separated and formed an assembly where it was the custom to admonish, reprove and punish," church discipline could soon be applied to individuals too.[1]

But the "hope" remained a mere hope even when the Visitation was over.

Nothing whatever is known of any further attempt of Luther in this direction, though, as Drews points out, "it is evident that he was unable to understand how Christians who had reached the faith could fail to feel themselves impelled to assemble in communities organised on the Apostolic model."[2] He had to look on helplessly while the followers of the new preaching formed a great congregation, of which many of the members were, as he had said, "not Christians at all," and whose prayer-gatherings were no more than "an incentive to faith and Christianity." (Above, p. 139.)

In Hesse alone had steps been taken—independently of the Visitation in the Saxon Electorate and previous to it—to bring about a condition of things more in accordance with Luther's ideal. Moreover, Luther himself preferred to remain entirely neutral in respect of this novel attempt, destined to become famous in the history of Protestant church-organisation. The prime mover in the Hessian plan was the preacher, Lambert of Avignon, an apostate Friar Minor; his draft was submitted to Landgrave Philip by a Synod held at Homberg at the end of 1526.[3] Philip forwarded it to Luther in order to hear his opinion. Among the proposals made in the draft were the following: After preaching for a while to the whole of the people, they were to be asked individually whether they wished to join the assembly of true believers and submit themselves to the discipline prevailing amongst them; those, however few in number, who give in their names are the Christians; as for the others they must be looked upon as pagans; the former have their meetings and choose their pastors because it is the duty of the flock to decide in what voice the shepherds shall speak. All the clergy were annually to meet the delegates of the congregations, nobles and princes in synod and to elect a committee and three Visitors for the direction and supervision of the whole Church of the land; these were also to ratify the election of all the clergy chosen by the people.[4]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 32), p. 399.

[2] P. 67.

[3] The plan as Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 47 f., rightly points out had been formed "mainly on elements previously brought forward by Luther."

[4] Reprinted in A. L. Richter, "Die evang. Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrh.," 1, 1846, p. 56.

Luther advised the Landgrave " not as yet to allow this order to appear in print, for I," he adds, " dare not yet be so bold as to introduce so great a number of laws amongst us and with such high-sounding words." He did not, however, by any means reject the plan absolutely. On the contrary he writes, that, in his opinion, it were better to allow the project to grow up gradually " from force of habit " ; a few of the pastors, " say one, three, six, or nine " might well make a beginning ; otherwise they were sure to find that " the people were not yet ripe for it," and that " much would have to be altered."[1]

As Landgrave Philip, after receiving from Luther this rather discouraging reply, proceeded no further, the " plan for the realisation of Luther's ideas " was carried stillborn to the grave.[2] " And yet it was the only practical plan which at all corresponded with the theories of the Reformer prior to 1525."[3] Later on Philip adopted the Saxon Reformation-book for the organising of the Church of Hesse.

That the project of esoteric congregations of true believers still survived in Luther's mind long after, in spite of the consolidation of the popular Church in the form of a State Church, is plain from a letter of his on June 26, 1533, to Tilemann Schnabel and the other Hessian clergy (" *episcopi Hassiæ* "), again sitting in assembly at Homberg. Schnabel was a whilom Provincial of the Saxon Augustinians and had taken part in the abortive attempt to establish a community of true Christians at Leisnig of which he was pastor. Finally, want, misery and his own instability of character drove him from the country.[4] From 1526 onwards he had been living at Alsfeld in Hesse. The new assembly at Homberg had submitted to Luther, for his approval, the draft of a scheme of church discipline, most probably inspired by Schnabel himself. Luther's reply is of the utmost importance for the understanding of his opinion of the conditions then prevailing in the Church.[5]

He is, at bottom, quite at one with the Hessian preachers, but, on practical grounds, chiefly on account of the lack of the " *veri Christiani*," he rejects the well-meant proposals as too far-reaching and incapable of execution.

[1] Jan. 7, 1527. " Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 170 (" Briefwechsel," 6, p. 9).

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 48.

[3] F. Feuchtwanger : " Gesch. der sozialen Politik . . . im Zeitalter der Reformation " (" Schmollers Jahrb. f. Gesetzgebung N.F.," 33, 1909), p. 193.

[4] Cp. Enders, " Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 73 n.

[5] June 26, 1533, to Schnabel, " Briefwechsel," 9, p. 316.

The time, according to him, "is not yet ripe for the introduction of discipline." "Verily one must let the peasants run riot a little . . . and then things will right themselves." We have not as yet taken root in the earth; when the branches and leaves shall have appeared, then we shall be better able to oppose the mighty. The Hessian preachers, so he tells them, instead of rushing in with the Greater Excommunication involving such serious civil consequences, would do better to begin with the so-called "Lesser Excommunication" in use at Wittenberg, simply excluding the unworthy from Communion and from the right to stand as sponsors; for "the Greater Excommunication does not come within our jurisdiction ('*quod non sit nostri iuris*'), and, moreover, concerns only those who desire to be real Christians; nor are we in these times in a position to make use of the Greater Excommunication; it would merely make us look silly were we to attempt it before we have the necessary power. You seem to hope that the Prince will take the enforcing of it into his own hands; but this is very uncertain, and it is better he should have nothing to do with it."

Thus, though Luther did not believe in the feasibility of a community of real Christians there and then, or that it was likely soon to be realised, yet the idea had not quitted his mind. The great mass of those belonging to his party meanwhile constituted a sort of popular Church. But such a popular Church was not in Luther's eyes the real institution intended by the Gospel. It consisted of the masses "who must first be left their own way for a while" before the Church can be established. Drews justly observes of the above statement: "Luther did not relinquish the ideal of a really Christian congregation because he had come to see that it was mistaken, the ideal had simply lost its practical value in his eyes because it now seemed impossible of realisation. Luther resigned himself to take things as they were. As he had always regarded it as his mission, not to organise, but merely to preach the Evangel, he was easily able to console himself. At any rate it would be quite wrong to say that the popular Churches which now grew up at all corresponded with his ideal."[1]

The popular Church throve, nevertheless, and, soon,

[1] *Ib.*, p. 68.

owing to the co-operation of numerous factors, became a State institution.

The result was the Lutheran State-Church, to be considered later in another connection, was something widely different from the original idea of its founder ; he frequently grumbled about it, without, however, being able to check its development, which, indeed, he himself had been the first to urge.[1] The sovereigns on their side, particularly the Saxon Elector in the very birthplace of the innovations, did their best to make ecclesiastical order, so far as externals, its organisation and control went, depend upon themselves.[2]

The Visitation of 1527, for which Luther himself had asked, furnished the Elector Johann with a welcome pretext for such action.

Even when giving his formal consent to the Visitation the Elector says, speaking of the " erection of parishes " : " We have considered and weighed the matter and have come to the conclusion that it becomes us as ruler of the land to see to the business."[3] Luther, moreover, for the sake of securing some order in the new Church by the only means at his command, outdid himself in assurances to the Elector, that, he, being the principal member of the Church, must take in hand the adjusting of the parishes and the appointment of suitable clergy ; that his very love of his country obliged him to this, and, that, owing to the pressing needs of the time, he was a sort of " makeshift bishop " of the Church. This last title is significant of the reserve Luther still maintained ; he was loath to see the Church's authority simply merged in that of the State ; he did, nevertheless, speak of the sovereign as the head of the new congregations and, little by little, allowed him so large a share in their government that, even in his own day, the secular sovereign was to all intents and purposes supreme head of the episcopate.[4]

[1] Below, xxxv., 2.

[2] To what extent the Elector was following the example of his Catholic ancestors in Church matters is shown by K. Pallas, " Entstehung des landesherrlichen Kirchenregiments in Kursachsen " (" N. Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiet historisch-antiquarischer Forschung "), 24, 2.

[3] To Luther, Nov. 26, 1526, " Briefwechsel," 5, p. 408.

[4] Proofs of this will be given below when we deal with Luther's attitude towards State government of the Church. So ineffectual was Luther's reserve and even his formal protest, that Carl Holl

9. Public Worship. Questions of Ritual

The ordering of public worship, particularly at Wittenberg, was a source of much anxiety to Luther. He was not blind to the difficulties which his reformation had to face in this department.

The soul of every religion must be sought in its public worship. Hence, in Catholicism, the bishops, from earliest times, had bestowed the most diligent and pious care on worship. A proof of this is to be found in the grand liturgies of antiquity and the prayers, lessons and outward rites with which they so lovingly surround the eucharistic sacrifice.

To build up a new liturgy from the very foundation was far from Luther's thoughts. He was not the "creator" of any new form of public worship. He preferred to make the best of the Roman Mass, for one reason, as he so often insists, because of the weak, i.e. so as not needlessly to alienate the people from the new Church by the introduction of novelties.[1] From the ancient rite he merely eliminated all that had reference to the sacrificial character of the Mass, the Canon, for instance, and the preceding Offertory. He also thought it best to retain the word "Mass" in both the writings in which he embodied his adaptation: "*Formula missæ et communionis pro ecclesia Wittenbergensi*" 1523,[2] and "Deudsche Messe und Ordnung Gottis Diensts" 1526.[3]

By the introduction of the German Mass in the latter year "the whole Pope was flung out of the Church,"[4] to use Spalatin's words. It is noteworthy that Luther, in announcing this latest innovation to the inhabitants of Wittenberg, admitted that he had been urged by the sovereign to make the change.[5]

(above, p. 134, n. 4) remarks (p. 59): "These exertions on Luther's part were of small avail. Facts proved stronger than his theories. Once the Visitation had been made in the Elector's name, then, in spite of all that might be said, he could not fail to appear as the one to whom the oversight of spiritual matters belonged. It must have been fairly difficult for the Electoral Chancery to make the distinction between the Elector speaking as a brother to other Christians and as a ruler to his subjects. It was certainly much easier to treat everything on the same lines." Cp. W. Friedensburg, above, vol. ii., p. 333, n. 2.

[1] Cp. vol. ii., p. 319 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 205; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 2 *sqq.*

[3] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 19, p. 70 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 227 ff.

[4] To V. Warnbeck, Sep. 30, 1525, see Schlegel. "Vita Spalatini," p 222. Cp. Jonas to Spalatin, Sep. 23, 1525, vol. iv., p. 511.

[5] "Since so many from all lands request me to do so, and the secular

In Luther's "German Mass," as in his even more traditional Latin one, we find at the beginning the Introit, Kyrie Eleison, Gloria and a Collect; then follows the Epistle for the Sunday together with a Gradual or Alleluia or both; then the Gospel and the Credo, followed by the sermon. "After the sermon the Our Father is to be publicly explained and an exhortation given to those intending to approach the Sacrament,"[1] then comes the Consecration. The Secret was omitted with the Offertory. The Preface was shortened. Of the whole of the hated "Canon"[2] the "priest" was merely to pronounce aloud over the Bread and Wine the words of consecration as given in 1 Cor. xi. 23–25, saying then the Sanctus and Benedictus. The Elevation came during the Benedictus.[3] The Our Father and the Pax follow, then the communion of the officiating clergyman and the faithful, under both kinds. To conclude there was another collect and then the blessing.

Some of the portions mentioned were sung by the congregation and great use was made of German hymns.[4] Whatever had been retained in Latin till 1526 was after that date put into German. For the sake of the scholars who had to learn Latin Luther would have been in favour of continuing to say the Mass in that language. The old ecclesiastical order of the excerpts of the Epistles and Gospels read in church was retained, though the selection was not to Luther's tastes; it seemed to him that the passages in Holy Scripture which taught saving faith were not sufficiently to the fore; he was convinced that the man who originally made the selection was an ignorant and superstitious admirer of works;[5] his advice was that the deficiency should at any rate be made good by the sermon. The celebration of Saints' days was abolished, saving the feasts of the Apostles and a few others, and of the feasts of the Virgin Mary only those were retained which bore on some mystery of Our Lord's life. In addition to the Sunday service short daily services were introduced consisting of the reading and expounding of Holy Scripture; these were to be attended at least by the scholars and those preparing themselves for the preaching office. At these services Communion was not to be dispensed as a general rule but only to those who needed it.

power also urges me to it." "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 50 f.; Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 278, from the Church-postils. Cp. G. Rietschel, "Lehrb. der Liturgik," Berlin, 1900, p. 278.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 95; Erl. ed., 22, p. 239.

[2] For Luther's writing: "Von dem Grewel der Stillmesse so man den Canon nennet," see above, vol. iv., p. 511 f.

[3] For the fate of this see our vol. iii., p. 392 f., vol. iv., p. 195, n. 4, p. 239, and Kawerau, in Möller, "KG," 3^3, p. 401.

[4] See below, xxxiv., 4.

[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 532. He also repeatedly complains that the hymns and prayers of antiquity failed to make sufficient mention of the Redemption and the Grace of Christ. Even in the "Te Deum" he misses the doctrine of Redemption, needless to say in the sense in which he taught it. "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 425.

Alb and chasuble continued to be worn by the clergyman at the "Mass" in the parish church of Wittenberg, though no longer in the monastic church. The Swiss who visited Wittenberg were struck by this, and, in their reports, declared that Luther's service was still half Popish. At Augsburg where Zwinglianism was rampant the "puppet show" of the Saxons, with their priestly vestments, candles, etc., seemed a "foolish" and scandalous thing.[1] Luther wished the use of lights and incense to be neither enjoined nor abolished.

As he frequently declared, the utmost freedom was to prevail in matters of ritual in order to avoid a relapse into the Popish practice of man-made ordinances. Even the adoption of the "Deudsche Messe, etc.," was to be left to the decision of the congregations and the pastors.[2] If they knew of anything better to set up in its place, this was not to be excluded; yet in every parish-congregation there must at least be uniformity. The chief thing is charity, edification and regard for the weak. Above all, the "Word must have free course and not be allowed to degenerate into singing and shouting, as was formerly the case."[3]

Of the whole of the Wittenberg liturgical service, he says in his "Deudsche Messe"—to the surprise of his readers who expected to find in it a work for the believers—that it did not concern true believers at all: "In short we do not set up such a service for those who are already Christians."[4] He is thinking, of course, of the earnest, convinced Christians whom, as stated above (p. 133 f.), he had long planned to assemble in special congregations. They alone in his eyes constituted the true Church, however imperfect and sinful they might be, provided they displayed faith and goodwill.

"They" (the true believers), he here says of his regulations, "need none of these things, for which indeed we do not live, but rather they for the sake of us who are not yet Christians, in order that we may become Christian; true believers have their service in the spirit."[5] In the case of the particular assemblies he had in mind for the latter, they would have to "enter their names and meet in some house or other for prayer, reading,

[1] W. Germann, "Johann Forster" ("N. Beitr. zur Gesch. deutschen Altertums," Hft. 12), 1894.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 72; Erl. ed., 22, p. 227.
[3] *Ib.*, 12, p. 37=22, p. 156. [4] *Ib.*, 19, p. 73=22, p. 228. [5] *Ib.*

baptism, receiving of the Sacrament and other Christian works." "Here there would be no need of loud or fine singing. They could descant a while on baptism and the Sacrament, and direct everything towards the Word and prayer and charity. All they would need would be a good, short catechism on faith, the Ten Commandments and the Our Father." Amongst them ecclesiastical discipline and particularly excommunication would be introduced; such assemblies would also be well suited for "common almsgiving," all the members helping in replenishing the poor-box.[1]

Until such "congregations apart" had come into being the service, and particularly the sermon, according to Luther, must needs be addressed to all. "Such a service there must be for the sake of those who are yet to become Christians, or need strengthening . . . especially for the sake of the simple-minded and young . . . on their account we must read, sing and preach . . . and, where this helps at all, I would have all the bells rung and all the organs played." He boasts of having been the first to impart to public worship this aim and character, "to exercise the young and to call and incite others to the faith"; the "popish services," on the other hand, were "so reprehensible" because of the absence of any such character.—In his Churches he sees "many who do not yet believe and are no Christians; the greater part stand there gaping at the sight of something new, just as though we were holding an open-air service among the Turks or heathen." Hence it seems to him quite necessary to regard the worship in common as simply a public encouragement to faith and Christianity.[2]

As for those Christians who already believed, Luther cannot loudly enough assert their freedom.

As his highest principle he sets up the following, which in reality is subversive of all liturgy: In Divine worship "it is a matter for each one's conscience to decide how he is to make use of such freedom [the freedom of the Christian man given by the Evangel]; the right to use it is not to be refused or denied to any. . . . Our conscience is in no way bound before God by this outward order."[3] This has the true Lutheran ring. Beside this must be placed his frequently repeated assertion, that we can give God nothing that tends to His honour, and that every effort on our part to give Him anything is merely an attempt to make something of man and his works, which works are invariably sinful.[4] He also teaches elsewhere that not only does real and true worship consist in a life of faith and love, but that

[1] *Ib.*, p. 75=230 f. [2] *Ib.*, 74 ff.=229 ff.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 72=228. [4] Cp. for instance above, p. 44 f.

the outward worship given in common is in reality a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (a gift to God after all) made in common solely because of all people's need to express their faith and love;[1] he also calls it a "*sacrificium*," naturally, not in the Catholic, but in the widest sense of the word. Even the expression "eucharistic sacrifice," i.e. sacrifice of praise, is not inacceptable to him; but at least the sacrifice must be entirely free.

With such a view the form of worship described above seems scarcely to tally. A well-defined outward order of worship was first proposed, and then prescribed; it would, according to Luther's statement, have imposed itself even on the assemblies of true believers. It is true, he says, that only considerations of charity and public order compel such outward regulations, that it was not his doing nor that of any other evangelical authority. Still it is a fact that they were enjoined, that a service according to the choice of the individual was, even in Luther's day, regarded with misgivings, and that even in the 16th century it fell to the secular prince to sanction the form of worship in church and to punish those who stayed away, those who failed to communicate and those who did not know their catechism.[2] We have here another instance of the same contradiction apparent in matters of dogma, where Luther bound down the free religious convictions of the individual—supposed to be based on conscience and the Bible—in cast-iron strands in his catechism and theological hymns. The catechism, even in the matter of confession, and likewise the theology of the hymns, closely trenched on the regulations for Divine worship. The Ten Commandments, the Our Father, etc., were also put into verse and song. Moreover, those who presented themselves for communion had to submit at least to a formal examination into their faith and intentions, and also to a certain scrutiny of their morals—a strange limitation surely of Evangelical freedom and of the universal priesthood of all believers.

According to Kawerau, the best Protestant liturgical writers agree, that a "false, pedagogic conception of wor-

[1] Cp. above, p. 45, and "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 87.

[2] On Luther's attitude towards such punishment cp. his letter to Margrave George of Brandenburg (Sep. 14, 1531), "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 4, p. 308 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 103).

ship" finds expression in Luther's form of service.[1] To make the aim of the public worship of the congregation—whatever elements the latter might comprise—a mere exercise for the young and a method of pressing "Christianity" on non-believers was in reality to drag down the sublime worship of God, the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" as Luther himself sometimes calls it, to an undeservedly low level.

This degradation was, however, intimately bound up with the fact, that Luther had robbed worship of its most precious and essential portion, the eucharistic sacrifice, which, according to the Prophet Malachias, was to be offered to the Lord from the rising till the going down of the sun as a pure and acceptable oblation. To the Catholic observer his service of the Mass, owing to the absence of this all-important liturgical centre, appears like a blank ruin. As early as 1524 he was told at Wittenberg that his service was "dreary and all too sober." Although it was his opposition to the Holy Sacrifice and its ceremonies which called forth this stricture, yet at the same time his objection to any veneration of the Saints also contributed to the lifeless character of the new worship. It was, however, above all, the omission of the sacrifice which rendered Luther's clinging to the ancient service of the Mass so unwarrantable.[2]

Older Protestant liturgical writers like Kliefoth spoke of the profound, mystical value of Luther's liturgy and even

[1] Kawerau in the "Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen," 1888, 1, p. 113 f., in his review of Joh. Gottschick, "Luthers Anschauungen vom christl. Gottesdienst," Freiburg, 1887: "In practice Luther helped to further a worship which, though easily to be explained, constituted nevertheless a questionable concession to the needs of the moment; for he vindicates the purely pedagogic character of worship and ascribes it to the need of educating backward Christians or of making real Christians of them." Kawerau speaks of this as "an object which, on every side, spells serious injury to worship itself." Gottschick had proved convincingly (p. 19 f.) that "such a conception of worship was on every point at variance with Luther's own principles concerning the priestly character of the congregation and the relation of prayer to faith." In this view Gottschick would find himself "in complete harmony with all eminent liturgical writers at the present day."

[2] J. Gottschick (see above, n. 1), in concluding, charges Luther's reform of divine worship with being merely an adaptation of the Roman Mass, absolutely worthless for Lutherans, adopted out of too great consideration for the weak; this form of worship, utterly at variance with his own liturgical principles, was not to be regarded as a real Lutheran liturgy.

of certain elements as being quite original. Recourse to the old scheme of the Mass, duly expurgated, was, however, a much simpler process than they imagined. We must also bear in mind, that Luther himself was not so rigid in restricting the liturgy to the forms he himself had sketched out as they assumed. On the contrary, he left room for development, and allowed the claims of freedom. Hence it is not correct to say, that he curtailed the tendency towards "free liturgical development," as has been asserted of him by Protestants in modern times.[1] For it was no mere pretence on his part when he spoke of freedom to improve. The progress made in hymnology owing to this freedom is a proof that better results were actually arrived at.

How easy it was, on the other hand, for liberty to lead to serious abuses is plain from the history of the Evangelical churches in Livonia. Melchior Hofmann, the preacher, had come from that country to Wittenberg complaining that the reformed service had given rise to the worst discord among both people and clergy. Luther composed a circular letter addressed to the inhabitants of Livonia, entitled "Eyne christliche Vormanung von eusserlichem Gottis Dienste unde Eyntracht an die yn Liefflland," which was printed together with a letter from Bugenhagen and another from Hofmann.[2] Therein he admits with praiseworthy frankness his embarrassment with regard to ceremonial uniformity.

"As soon as a particular form is chosen and set up," he says, "people fall upon it and make it binding, contrary to the freedom brought by faith." "But if nothing be set up or appointed, the result is as many factions as there are heads. . . . One must, however, give the best advice one can, albeit everything is not at once carried out as we speak and teach." He accordingly encourages those whom he is addressing to meet together amicably "in order that the devil may not slink in unawares, owing to this outward quarrel about ceremonies." "Come to some agreement as to how you wish these external matters arranged, that harmony and uniformity may prevail among you in your region," otherwise the people would grow "confused and discontented." Beyond such general exhortations he does not go and thus refuses to face the real difficulty.

When seeking to introduce uniformity nothing was to be imposed as "absolute command," but merely to "ensure the unity of the Christian people in such external matters"; in other words, "because you see that the weak need and desire it." The

[1] Cp. Kawerau's quotations in his article in the "Göttinger Gel. Anzeigen," 1888, 1, p. 115.

[2] June 17, 1525, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 412 ff.; Erl. ed., 53, p. 315 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 198). For Bugenhagen's letter see "Briefwechsel," p. 207, for Hofmann's, *ib.*, p. 213.

people, however, were "to inure themselves to the breaking out of factions and dissensions. For who is able to ward off the devil and his satellites?" "When you were Papists the devil, of course, left you in peace. . . . But now that you have the true seed of the divine Word he cannot refrain from sowing his own seed alongside."

The writing did no good, for the confusion continued. It was only in 1528 that the Königsberg preacher, Johann Briesmann, at the request of the authorities and with Luther's help, established a new form of church government in Livonia.

Were one to ask which was the principal point in Luther's Mass, the Supper or the sermon, it would not be easy to answer.

The term Mass and the adaptation of the olden ritual would seem to speak in favour of the Supper.[1] If, however, the service was to consist principally of the celebration of the Supper it was necessary there should always be communicants. Without communions there was, according to Luther, no celebration of the Sacrament. Now at Wittenberg there were not always communicants, nor was there any prospect of the same presenting themselves at every Sunday service, or that things would always remain as in 1531 when Luther boasted, that "every Sunday the hundred or so communicants were always different people."[2]

At the weekly services, communion in any case was very unusual. The custom had grown up under Luther's eyes that, on Sundays, as soon as the sermon was over, the greater part of the congregation left the church.[3] From this it is clear that the ritual involved a misunderstanding. In practice the celebration of the Supper became something merely supplementary, whereas, according to Luther himself, it ought to have constituted either the culmination of the service, or at least an organic part of Divine worship; under him, however, it was soon put on the same level with the sermon though the organic connection between the two is not clear. Indeed, it would be more accurate to say

[1] Kawerau, in Möller, "KG.," 3^3, p. 400; "The influence of the Catholic past is still evident in the fact, that, in spite of the predominant position assigned to preaching, the view still prevailed that Divine worship, in order to be complete, must include the Supper, and that it culminated in this 'office.' This, even in the 16th century, gave rise to difficulties."

[2] To Margrave George of Brandenburg in the letter quoted above, p. 145, n. 2.

[3] Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 401.

that predominance was assigned to the sermon,[1] which undoubtedly was only right if, as Luther maintains, worship was intended only for instruction.

In our own day some have gone so far as to demand that the sermon should be completely sundered from the Supper; and also to admit, that the creation of a real Lutheran liturgy constitutes "a problem still to be solved."[2]

It is a fact of great ethical importance, that, what was according to Luther the Sacrament of His Real Presence instituted by Christ Himself, had to make way for preaching and edification by means of prayers and hymns. Even the Elevation had to go. From the beginning its retention had aroused "misgivings,"[3] and, to say the least, Luther's reason for insisting on it, viz. to defy Carlstadt who had already abolished it, was but a poor one. It was abrogated at Wittenberg only in 1542; elsewhere, too, it was discontinued.[4] Thus the Sacrament receded into the background as compared with other portions of the service. But, like prayer and hymn-singing, preaching too is human and subject to imperfections, whereas the Sacrament, even though it be no sacrifice, is, even according to Luther, the Body of Christ. Luther was, indeed, ready with an answer, viz. that the sermon was also the Word of God, and, that, by means of both Sacrament and sermon, God was working for the strengthening of faith. Whether this reply gets rid of the difficulty may here be left an open question. At any rate the ideal Word of God could not be placed on the same footing with the sermons as frequently delivered at that time by expounders of the new faith, capable or otherwise, sermons, which, according to Luther's own loud complaints, contained anything but the rightful Word of God, and were anything but worthy of being classed together with the Sacrament as one of the two component parts of Divine worship.

Three charges of a general character were made by Luther against Catholic worship. First, "the Word of God had not been preached . . . this was the worst abuse." Secondly, "many unchristian fables and lies found their way into the legends, hymns and sermons." Finally, "worship was performed as a

[1] *Ib.*, p. 400. Luther says: "*Diligens verbi Dei prædicatio est proprius cultus novi testamenti.*" "Opp. lat. exeg.," 19, p. 161.
[2] Gottschick. [3] This is Kawerau's opinion, *ib.*, p. 401.
[4] See above, p. 146, n. 3.

work whereby to win salvation and God's grace; and so faith perished."[1]

Of these charges it is hard to say which is the most unjust. His assertion that the Word of God had not been preached and that there was no Bible-preaching, has been refuted anew by every fresh work of research in the history of preaching at that time. Nor was the Bible-element in preaching entirely lacking, though it might not have been so conspicuous. The truth is, that, in many places, sermons were extremely frequent.[2]

Luther's second assertion, viz. that Catholic worship was full of lying legends, does not contain the faintest trace of truth, more particularly there where he was most radical in his work of expurgation, i.e. in the Canon. The Canon was a part of the Mass-service, which had remained unaltered from the earliest times. It was only into the sermons that legends had found their way to a great extent.

If finally, as seems likely, Luther, by his third charge, viz. that the olden Church sought to "win salvation and God's Grace" through her worship, means that this was the sole or principal aim of Catholic worship, here, too, he is at sea. The real object had always been the adoration and thanksgiving which are God's due, offered by means of the sublime sacrifice united with the spiritual sacrifice of the whole congregation. Adoration and thanksgiving found their expression above all in the sublime Prefaces of the Mass. The thought already appears in the "*Sursum corda, Gratias agamus*, etc., *Dignum et iustum est*," whereupon the priest, taking up again the "*Dignum et iustum est*," proceeds: "*Æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere . . . per Christum Dominum nostrum.*" It is not without significance that "*dignum*," "*iustum*" and "*æquum*" stand first, and that "*salutare*" comes after; praise and thanksgiving are what it becomes us first of all to offer in presence of God's Majesty, but they are also profitable to us because they render God gracious to us.[3]

The ritual of the Catholic sacrifice, dating as it does from the Church's remotest past, expresses adequately the highest thoughts of Christian ethics, viz. the adoration of the Creator by the creature through the God-man Christ, Who alone worthily honours Him. To this idea Luther's attempt at a liturgy does not do justice.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 35; Erl. ed., 22, p. 153. "Von Ordenung Gottes Dienst ynn der Gemeyne," 1523.

[2] Of the most recent studies we need only mention here H. Greving, "Ecks Pfarrbuch für U.L. Frau in Ingolstadt" ("RGl. Studien"), Hft. 4 and 5, 1908, p. 87 ff. Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People". (Engl. Trans.), vol. i., *passim*.

[3] This introduction, together with the whole text of the common Preface, enters into Luther's Latin Mass. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 212; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 8. In his German Mass it is suppressed.

10. Schwenckfeld as a Critic of the Ethical Results of Luther's Life-work

Caspar Schwenckfeld, the Silesian nobleman (see above, p. 78 ff.), is a type of those men who attached themselves to Lutheranism with the utmost enthusiasm, but, who, owing to the experience they met with and in pursuance of those very principles which Luther himself had at first advocated, came to strike out new paths of their own.

In spite of his pseudo-mystical schemes for the establishment of a Church on the Apostolic model; in spite of his abandonment of doctrines to which Luther clung as to an heirloom of the ancient Church; regardless of his antagonism to Luther—which the latter repaid with relentless persecution—this cultured fanatic expressed in his numerous writings and letters his lasting gratitude to, and respect for, Luther on account of the services which the latter had in his opinion rendered in the restoration of truth. He extols his "wonderful trumpet-call,"[1] and without any trace of hypocrisy, says: "What Martin Luther and others have done aright, for instance in the expounding of Holy Scripture . . . I trust I will, with God's help, never underrate."[2]

At the same time, however, he is not slow to express it as his conviction, that, "At the beginning of the present Evangel the said [Lutheran] doctrine was far better, purer and more wholesome than it is now."[3] "Dr. Martin led us out of Egypt, through the Red Sea and into the wilderness, and there he left us to lose ourselves on the rough roads; yet he seeks to persuade everybody that we are already in the Promised Land." This he said in 1528.[4]

"Although Luther has written much that is good," "that has been and still may be profitable to believers, for which we give praise and thanks to God the Lord, still he has also written much that is evil, and in the end it will be proved that his and his people's doctrine or *theologia* was neither apostolic, nor pure, nor perfect . . . which certainly might have been seen long since by its fruits."[5]

[1] "Epistolar," 2, 2, 1570. Ecke (see below, p. 156, n. 1), p. 159.
[2] "Der erste Teil der christl. orthodox. Bücher und Schriften. . . . Schwenckfelds . . . durch Mitbekenner zusammengetragen," 1564, p. 4. Ecke, p. 160; cp. p. 10 f.
[3] "Epistolar," *ib.*, p. 228; cp. p. 246. [4] *Ib.*, p. 645. [5] *Ib.*, p. 519.

His criticisms of Luther, which, in spite of his harsh treatment at the latter's hands, are throughout temperately expressed and with a certain aristocratic reticence, deal on the one hand with the fruits of the Wittenberg Reformation, and, on the other, with certain main features of the ethical teaching of his master and one-time friend; his strictures thus form a recapitulation of what has gone before.

On the hoped-for Moral Revival

"The reformation of life has not taken place," this is what Carl Ecke, Schwenckfeld's latest biographer, represents as the honest conviction of the "apostolic" preacher of the faith in Silesia.[1] "The religion of Lutheranism as it then was did not, in Schwenckfeld's opinion, as a whole reach the standard of Bible Christianity."[2] "The greater part of the common herd," says Schwenckfeld, "who are called Lutherans do not know to-day how they stand, whether with regard to works, or in relation to God and to their own conscience."[3]

Schwenckfeld's own standard was certainly somewhat one-sided and his own Apostolic Church, so far as it ever saw the light, fell considerably short of the ideal. His insight into the ethical conditions and doctrines was, however, keen enough and his judgment was at least far calmer and clearer than that of Carlstadt and Luther's other more hot-headed antagonists. He was also able to base his definite and oft-repeated statements on the experience he had gained during his wide travels and in intercourse with all sorts of men.

Thus he writes: "If by God's grace I see the great common herd and the poor folk on both sides, as they really are, then I must fain admit, that, under the Papacy and in spite of all its errors, there are more pious, godfearing men than in Lutheranism. I also believe that they might more easily be improved than some of our Evangelicals who are now trying to hide themselves and their sinful life behind Holy Scripture, nay, behind a fictitious

[1] "Schwenckfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Ref.," Berlin, 1911, p. 161.

[2] Ecke, p. 176. The Protestant author adds in a note: "It must, however, be pointed out that this criticism does not affect the apostolic nature of the profound phenomena of Evangelical piety seen among Lutherans."

[3] "Christl. Bücher," etc. (above, p. 155, n. 2), p. 384. Ecke, p. 177.

faith and Christ's satisfaction, and in whom no fear of God is left."[1]

Many of Schwenckfeld's more specific complaints are supported by other witnesses. We may compare what Luther himself and his friends report of the conditions at Wittenberg[2] with what Schwenckfeld says a little later: "It is credibly asserted concerning their Church at Wittenberg, that there such a mad, dissolute life prevails as is woeful to see; there is no discipline whatever, no fear of God, and the people are wild, impudent and unmannerly, particularly Philip's students, so that even Dr. Major not long since (1556) is himself said to have complained of it there in a sermon, saying: Our Wittenberg is so widely talked of that strangers fancy there are only angels here; when, however, they come they find only devils incarnate. If Philip, who sends out his disciples as Apostles '*in omnem terram*' does not found any better Churches than these, he has but little to boast of before God."[3]

"What harm and damage to consciences such Lutheran teaching has brought into Christendom it is easier to bewail with many tears than to describe." Though Luther's "Evangel and office has discovered and made an end of much false worship and a great apostasy, for which we give thanks to God the Lord," yet "it has but little of the power of grace, of the Holy Spirit, or of blessing, for bringing sinners to repentance and true conversion."[4]

"Thus we have Schwenckfeld's witness that he had seen nothing of any real awakening or revival among the people generally. Whole classes, the merchant class, for instance, remained inwardly untouched by the glad tidings; even where the 'Word' was preached, there the bad sermons, of which Schwenckfeld had complained as early as 1524, often produced evil fruits." Thus writes Ecke.[5] Schwenckfeld, however, does not lay all the blame on the preachers, but rather directly on the ethical principles resulting from Luther's doctrines, which had filled the utterances of the new preachers with so much that was dangerous and misleading. "Oh, how many of our nobles have I heard say: 'I cannot help it,' 'it is God's Will,' 'God does all, even my sin, and I am not answerable'; 'if He has predestined me I shall be saved.'" "How many have I heard, who all appealed to the Wittenberg writings, and, who, alas, to-day, are ten times worse than before the Evangel began to be preached."[6]

Whenever he exhorted his Lutheran co-religionists to conversion and holiness of life, so he declares in 1543, he always received some reply such as the following: "We are poor sinners and can do nothing good." "Faith alone without works saves us." "We cannot keep God's law"; "have no free-will." "Amendment is not in our power." "Christ has done enough

[1] "Epistolar," *ib.*, p. 602. In 1550. Ecke, p. 196.
[2] See our vol. iv., p. 210 ff., for instance, and below, vol. vi., xxxix., 1.
[3] "Die ander Verantwortung," 1556, Aiii. Ecke, p. 190 f.
[4] "Christl. Bücher," p. 326 f. Ecke, p. 163. [5] *Ib.*
[6] "Epistolar," 1, 1566, p. 680. Ecke, p. 164.

for us ; He has overthrown sin, death, hell and the devil ; that is what we have to believe."[1] When he preached sanctification he was dubbed a " Papist." " That the Lutherans accuse me of being more a Papist than a Lutheran is due mainly to good works and the stress I lay on them."[2]

Even in 1524 he had published an essay on practical ethics entitled, " An Exhortation regarding the misuse of sundry Articles of the Evangel, etc." (Above, 79 f.) In 1547 he found it necessary to publish another work on the " Misuse of the Evangel." To this misuse he attributes most of the above excuses of his " Lutheran co-religionists." Luther himself, so he declares here, was much to blame for the confusion that prevailed. He quotes many passages from Luther's Church-postils, from the edition printed at Wittenberg in 1526 with prefaces by Luther and Stephen Roth. He also makes use of the same work in another book, " On Holy Scripture," which he also wrote in 1547.[3] Many of the incriminated passages were " wickedly omitted " in the next editions of the Church-postils.[4]

Further Complaints of Schwenckfeld's. The Ethical Doctrines

Schwenckfeld, in his strictures on Luther's preaching and its results, deals with the ethical side of the new teaching concerning the Law and the Gospel.

Luther had said, that, with the law, God " wished to do no more than make us feel our helplessness, our weakness and our sickness."[5] The critic asks : " Why not also to make us eschew evil and do good, 1 Peter iii. ? " On the other hand, Luther will have it that the " Law makes all of us sinners so that not even the smallest tittle of these commandments can be kept even by the most holy." " Such is in short Luther's doctrine concerning the Law and the Commandments of God. There he lets it rest, as though the ground and contents of the Law and God's intention therein—which was centred on Christ—were nothing. . . .

[1] " Christl. Bücher," p. 362. In 1547. Ecke, *ib.*
[2] Ecke, p. 164, from a MS.
[3] " Christl. Bücher," p. 477. Ecke, p. 164.
[4] Thus G. Arnold, " Kirchenhistorie," Frankfurt a/M., 1729, 1, p. 413.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 395. Ecke, p. 170 f., where he quotes in support of this and what follows, " Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, pp. 164 f., 174.

Of this doctrine, particularly, the common people can make nothing save that God has given us His commandments, not in order that we may keep them by means of His Grace, but only that we may thereby come to the knowledge of sin."[1]

"Why should we hate our life in this world . . . and follow Christ? Nay, why take pains at all to enter in at the narrow gate and to seek the strait way to life everlasting (Mt. vii.) if it is possible to reach heaven along the broad way on which so many walk who are called Lutherans, and to enter in through the wide gate which they make for themselves!"[2]

Two other points of doctrine which in the same connection Schwenckfeld censures in the strongest terms as real stumbling blocks in ethics, are the preaching of predestination and the denial of free-will.

How, at the outset, the "learned had soared far too high" with their article of predestination "and, by means of their human wisdom, reached a philosophical, heathen conception [presumably the ancient '*fatum*'] can readily be seen from their books, especially from Luther's against free-will and Melanchthon's first Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans."[3]

"Luther writes that no one is free to plan either good or evil, but only does as he is obliged; that, as God wills, so we live. . . . *Item*, that the man who does evil has no control over himself, that it is not in man's power to do evil or not, but that he is forced to do it, '*nos coacti facimus.*'" "God," so Philip tells us, "does all things by His own power."[4]

"They have treated of predestination in accordance with heathen philosophy, forgetful of Christ and the Grace of the Gospel now made manifest; they wrote of it from a human standpoint; and though Luther and Philip, after they had seen the evil results, would gladly have retracted it, yet because what they had formerly taught was very pleasing to the flesh, it took root in men's hearts so deeply that what they afterwards said passed almost unheard."[5]

"This aberration," says Ecke, "was to Schwenckfeld a further sign that their method of reformation was not that of good missionaries."[6]

Schwenckfeld complains rightly: "Instead of beginning, after the Apostles' example, by preaching penance in the name of

[1] *Ib.* [2] *Ib.*, p. 325. Ecke, p. 172.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 377. Ecke, p. 168.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 420. Schwenckfeld's excuse is, however, worthy of note, p. 401: "Such doctrine is not the outcome of an evil mind but is due to misapprehension." Ecke, p. 168.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 421. Ecke, p. 169. [6] *Ib.*

Christ . . . they preferred vehemently to urge such lofty matters as predestination and the Divine election together with the denial of free-will."[1]

The universal priesthood as commonly preached and understood by the people furnishes Schwenckfeld with a further cause for grumbling. "They have also been in the habit of preaching and shouting to the multitudes that all of them were already Christians, children of God and spiritual kings and princes. What corruption of conscience and abuse of the Evangel has resulted from all this we see and hear to-day from many . . . who thereby have fallen into a bold and godless manner of life."[2]

Finally there was Luther's ethical attitude towards sin. "Look at the second sermon for Easter Day in Luther's Church-sermons [where he says]: 'Where now is sin? It is nailed to the cross. . . . If only I hold fast to this, I shall have a good conscience of being, like Christ Himself, without sin; then I can defy death, devil, sin and hell.'"

Schwenckfeld continues: "And again: 'Seeing that Christ allowed Himself to be put to death for sin, it cannot harm me. Thus does faith work in the man who believes that Christ has taken away sin; such a one feels himself to be without sin like Christ, and knows that death, devil and hell have been conquered and cannot harm him any more.' *Hæc ille.* This has proved a scandal to many."[3]

He is angered by what Luther says in his sermon for the 8th Sunday after Trinity, that "no work can condemn a man, that unbelief is the only sin, and that it was the comfort of Christians to know that sins do not harm them. *Item*, that only sinners belong to the Kingdom of God."—He is much shocked at such sayings as, "If you but believe you are freed from sin. . . . If we believe then we have a Gracious God and only need to direct our works to the advantage of our neighbour so that they may be profitable to him."[4]

Such a form of neighbourly love does not suffice to reassure Schwenckfeld as to the method of justification taught by Luther. "We see here that repentance, the renewal of the heart and the crucifixion of the flesh with its lusts and concupiscences, as well as the Christian combat . . . are all forgotten." "How is it possible that such easy indulgence and soft and honeyed sermons should not lead to little account being made of sin, seeing the

[1] *Ib.*, p. 401. Ecke, *ib.* [2] *Ib.* Ecke, p. 170.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 361. Ecke quotes "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 217.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 365. Ecke, p. 166, quotes Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 218; 14^2, pp. 281 f., 287 ff.

people are told that God winks at the sins of all those who believe ? "[1]

Again and again he returns to the patent fact that " the result of such shameless preaching and teaching is nothing but a grave and damnable abuse of the Evangel of Jesus Christ, since people now make but little account even of many and great sins."[2]

For Luther to point to the Crucified and tell the believer that " sin is nothing but a devilish spectre and a mere fancy," was to speak " fanatically." Luther might write what he pleased, but here, at any rate, he was himself guilty of that fanatism of which he was fond of accusing others.[3] Schwenckfeld himself had been numbered by the preachers among the crazy fanatics.

The Silesian also ruthlessly attacked the imputation of the merits of Christ by means of the *Sola Fides*.

The Lutherans, even the best of them, imagine their righteousness to be nothing else " but the bare faith, since they believe God accounts them righteous, even though they remain as they were before." " They should, however, be exhorted to search Holy Scripture and to ask themselves in their hearts whether such faith and righteousness are not rather a human persuasion, mere imposition and self-delusion . . . which men invent to justify an impenitent life ; not a true, living faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . which, as Scripture says, purifies the heart, Acts xv. . . ., reconciles consciences, Rom. v. . . ., and brings Christ into our hearts, Eph. iii., Gal. ii."[4]

An instructive parallel and at the same time a severe censure on Luther's method of building up " faith " on inward assurance is afforded by Schwenckfeld's account of the experiences and spiritual trials on which he himself had founded his faith. The preachers, insisting on the outward Word, urged that he had no right to appeal to his mere feelings ; yet, as he points out, this very thing had been proclaimed from Wittenberg as the right, nay the duty of all.

" In addition to all this they reject the ghostly feeling and that inward sense of the Grace of God which Luther at the outset . . . declared to be necessary for salvation, writing that : ' No one can rightly understand God or the Word of God unless he has it direct from the Holy Ghost.' No one, however, can receive it from the Holy Ghost unless he experiences it, makes trial of it and feels it ; in this experience the Holy Ghost is teaching us as

[1] *Ib.* [2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*

[4] *Ib.*, p. 343 f. Cp. " Epistolar," 2, 2, p. 912. Ecke, p. 176. Cp. Döllinger, on Schwenckfeld, in " Die Reformation," 1, p. 254 ff.

in His own school, outside of which nothing is learned but all is mere delusion, words and vapouring."[1]

"How would Dr. Luther's own gloss stand," Schwenckfeld asks elsewhere, "which he gives on the words of the New Testament, 1 Cor. xi.: 'Let a man prove himself,' and where he says: 'to prove oneself is to feel one's faith,' etc.? But the man who feels his faith will assuredly by such a faith—which is a power of God and the very being of the Holy Ghost—have forgiveness of sins and bear Christ in his believing heart."[2]

He reproaches Luther with having in later days failed to distinguish between the outward Word or preaching and the inward living Word of God. The blunt assertion of the preachers—which was encouraged by "Luther's unapostolic treatment of the problem of Christian experience"[3]—that faith referred solely to the written Word and was elicited merely by preaching,[4] leads in practice to neglect of those passages of Scripture which speak of the Divine character of faith and of its transmission by the Holy Ghost; owing to the lack of a faith really felt, there was also wanting any "holiness of life worked by the Spirit, and any moral justice and sanctification."[5]

Schwenckfeld on the Popular Church and the New Divine Service

The system of a State Church then being set up, the externalism of the Lutheran Popular Church and the worship introduced were naturally looked at askance by the promoter of the Church Apart of true believers; at the same time his strictures are not unduly biassed.[6]

He looks at the matter from the standpoint of Lutheran freedom, or as Carl Ecke expresses it, of "the early Christian individualism rediscovered by Luther."[7] From this point of view Schwenckfeld can detect in the official Lutheran Church only a shadow of the Apostolic Church. Not merely the principle of the multitude, but also the appeal to the authorities for help and coercion was opposed to the spirit of Christ, at least according to all he had learnt from Luther.

"He raises the question whether that can possibly be the true Church of Christ where human coercion, force, commands and prohibitions, rather than Christian freedom and willingness, rule over faith and conscience. . . . The secular sword has no place

[1] "Epistolar," 2, 2, p. 913. Ecke, p. 55.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 427. Cp. "Epistolar," I., p. 410.
[3] Ecke's words, p. 161.
[4] "Epistolar," 2, 2, p. 513, cp. p. 403 ff.; 1, p. 424. Ecke, *ib.*
[5] Ecke, p. 162.
[6] Cp. Ecke, p. 160, n. 3.
[7] *Ib.*, p. 222.

in the Churches of Christ, but belongs to the secular authorities for the punishment of the wicked. . . . As little as it is in the power of the authorities to bestow the faith on anyone, to strengthen or increase it, so little does it befit it to force, coerce or urge. . . . What the authorities do here [in matters of faith] is nothing but violence, insolence and tyranny."[1]

But "we always want to attract the great crowd!"[2] "They saw the great multitude and feared lest the churches should dwindle away."[3] How were they to keep "Mr. Omnes, the common people, faithful to their churches without the help of the secular arm?"[4] They do not even think of first honestly instructing the magistrates how to become Christians and what the duty of a Christian is. . . . I am unable in conscience to agree with those who make idols of them so speedily and persuade them that they already have that, which their own conscience tells them they have never received."[5]

At the Supper, too, so he complains, owing to the want of proper discrimination between the converted and unconverted, "a false security of conscience is aroused, whereby people are led away from true repentance; for they teach that it is a source of grace, indulgence, ablution of sin, and salvation, whereas it is plain that no one receives anything of the kind."[6] In his view it is not right to say that the Supper leads man to reconciliation with God by enlivening his faith, and that even that man "who is full of sin or has a bad conscience gnawed and bitten by his sins" should receive it, as the preachers teach;[7] on the contrary, only those who are reconciled have the right to approach. "Not the man who wants to be holy [the unjustified], but he who has already been hallowed by Christ, is fit for the Supper."[8]

From the standpoint of his own peculiar doctrine he characterises it as a downright error on Luther's part to have "put Justification even into the Sacrament"—Schwenckfeld himself had thrown all the sacraments overboard.—He also reproaches Luther with teaching, that: "Forgiveness of sins, which is only to be found in Christ as ruler, is to be sought in the Sacrament."[9]

Now, Schwenckfeld was far from advising people to forsake the official Church; he did not recommend that the church service and its ceremonies and sermons should be shunned, he feared lest such advice might play into the hands of the Anabaptists. He recommends as necessary an "external practice of godliness."[10] Yet, according to him, this was more readily carried out in private con-

[1] Ecke, p. 180 f.; from MS. sources.
[2] "Epistolar," 2, 2, p. 639. Ecke, p. 179.
[3] "Epistolar," 1, p. 99. Ecke, p. 181. [4] *Ib.* Ecke, p. 182.
[5] *Ib.*, 1, p. 92. Ecke, p. 181. [6] *Ib.*, p. 736. Ecke, p. 182.
[7] "Christl. Bücher," p. 363. Ecke, p. 173.
[8] *Ib.* [9] "Epistolar," 2, 2, p. 1014. Ecke, p. 160.
[10] Ecke, p. 227, MS.

venticles, i.e. in some sort of congregation apart of the true believers such as Luther himself had long dreamt of, and in conversation with Schwenckfeld, in 1525, regretted his inability to establish owing to the fewness of true Christians. (Above, p. 138 f.)

Luther in the meantime had become reconciled to the outer, Popular, Church, and, with his preachers' help, had made of the outward Word a law.

The imperious behaviour of Luther and the preachers in the matter of the outward Word was, however, odious to Schwenckfeld. He protested strongly against being tied down to professions of faith liable at any moment to be rendered obsolete by new discoveries in Scripture truth.[1] Interest in things Divine was regarded as a privilege of the pastor's office and the layman was kept in ignorance on the ground, that "one must believe blindly."[2] Luther "is setting up a new tyranny, and wishes to tie men to his doctrine."[3]

[1] "Christl. Bücher," pp. 962, 965. Ecke, p. 191.
[2] "Epistolar," 1, p. 173. "Christl. Bücher," p. 74 f., 549. Ecke, *ib.*
[3] "Epistolar," 1, p. iii. B. Ecke, p. 86.

CHAPTER XXX

LUTHER AT THE ZENITH OF HIS LIFE AND SUCCESS, FROM 1540 ONWARDS. APPREHENSIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

1. The Great Victories of 1540–1544

THE opening of the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541[1] coincided with the advance of Protestantism in one of the strongholds of the power and influence of Albert of Mayence. The usual residence of the Archbishop and Elector was at Halle, in his diocese of Magdeburg. Against this town accordingly all the already numerous Protestants in Albert's sees of Magdeburg and Halberstadt directed their united efforts. Albert was compelled by the local Landtag to abolish the Catholic so-called "Neue Stift" at Halle, and to remove his residence to Mayence. Thereupon Jonas, Luther's friend, at once, on Good Friday, 1541, commenced to preach at the church of St. Mary's at Halle. He then became permanent preacher and head of the growing movement in the town, while two other churches were also seized by Lutheran preachers.

The town and bishopric of Naumburg, which had been much neglected by its bishop, Prince Philip of Bavaria, who resided at Freising, fell a prey to the innovations under the Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony; this in spite of being an imperial city under the immediate protection of the Emperor. The Elector had taken advantage of his position as arbitrator, thanks to his influence and to the authority he soon secured, gradually to establish himself in Naumburg. By his orders, in 1541, as soon as Philip was dead, Nicholas Medler began to preach at the Cathedral as "Superintendent of Naumburg"; Julius Pflug, the excellent Provost, who had been elected bishop by the Cathedral chapter, was prevented by the Elector from taking possession of the see. Even the

[1] See above, vol. iv., p. 367.

Wittenberg theologians were rather surprised at the haste and violence with which the Elector proceeded to upset the religious conditions there, and—a matter which concerned him deeply—to seize the city and the whole diocese. (See below, p. 191 f.)

The storm was already gathering over the archbishopric of Cologne under the weak and illiterate Archbishop, Hermann von Wied. This man, who was in reality more of a secular ruler, after having in earlier days shown himself kindly disposed to the Church, was won over, first by Peter Medmann in 1539 and then by Martin Bucer in 1541, and persuaded to introduce Lutheranism. Only by the energetic resistance of the chapter, and particularly of the chief Catholics of the archdiocese, was the danger warded off; to them the Archbishop owed, first his removal, and then his excommunication.

On March 28, 1546, shortly before the excommunication, the Emperor Charles V said to Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who had been pleading the cause of Hermann: "Why does he start novelties? He knows no Latin, and, in his whole life, has only said three Masses, two of which I attended myself. He does not even understand the Confiteor. To reform does not mean to bring in another belief or another religion."[1]

"We are beholders of the wonders of God," so Luther wrote to Hermann Bonn, his preacher, at Osnabrück; "such great Princes and Bishops are now being called of God by the working of the Holy Ghost."[2] He was speaking not only of the misguided Archbishop of Cologne but also of the Bishop of Münster and Osnabrück, who had introduced the new teaching at Osnabrück by means of Bonn, Superintendent of Lübeck. Luther, however, was rather too sanguine. In the same year he announced to Duke Albert of Prussia: "The two bishops of 'Collen' and Münster, have, praise be to God, accepted the Evangel in earnest, strongly as the Canons oppose it. Things are also well forward in the Duchy of Brunswick."[3] As a matter of fact he turned out right only as regards Brunswick.

[1] Ch. v. Rommel, "Philipp der Grossmüthige, Landgraf von Hessen," 1, 1820, p. 517.
[2] Aug. 5, 1543, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 580.
[3] May 7, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 557.

Henry, the Catholic Duke, was expelled in 1542 by the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse after the war which broke out on account of Goslar had issued in his loss of the stronghold of Wolfenbüttel; thereupon with the help of Bugenhagen the churches of the land were forcibly brought over to Lutheranism.

In 1544 the appointment at Merseburg of a bishop of the new faith in the person of George of Anhalt followed on Duke Maurice of Saxony's illegal seizure of the see. So barefaced was this act of spoliation that even Luther entered a protest against "this rapacious onslaught on Church property."[1] The appointment of an "Evangelical bishop" at Naumburg took place in 1542 under similar circumstances.

From Metz, where the preacher Guillaume Farel was working for the Reformation, an application was received for admission into the Schmalkalden League. The Lutherans there received at least moral support from Melanchthon who, in the name of the League, addressed a writing to the Duke of Lorraine. Not only distant Transylvania, but even Venice, held correspondence with Luther in order to obtain from him advice and instructions concerning the Protestant congregations already existing in those regions.

Thus the author of the religious upheaval might well congratulate himself, when, in the evening of his days, he surveyed the widespread influence of his work.

He was at the same time well aware what a potent factor in all this progress was the danger which menaced Germany from the Turks. The Protestant Estates continued to exploit the distress of the Empire to their own advantage in a spirit far from loyal. They insisted on the Emperor's granting their demands within the Empire before they would promise effectual aid against the foe without; their conduct was quite inexcusable at such a time, when a new attack on Vienna was momentarily apprehended, and when the King of France was quite openly supporting the Turks.

In the meantime as a result of the negotiations an Imperial army was raised and Luther published his prudent "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken." In this he advised the princes to do their duty both towards God and the Evangel and towards the Empire by defending it against the foe. The Pope is as much an enemy as the

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 562.

Turk, and the world has reached its close, for the last Judgment is at hand.[1]

The Emperor found it advisable to show himself even more lenient than before; the violent encroachments of the Protestants, which so unexpectedly strengthened their position, were allowed to pass unresisted; the ecclesiastical and temporal penalties pronounced against the promoters of the innovations remained a dead letter, and for the time being the Church property was left in their hands. At the Diet of Spires, in 1544, the settlement was deferred to a General Council which the Reichsabschied describes as a "Free Christian Council within the German Nation."

As was only to be expected, Paul III, the supreme head of Christendom, energetically protested against such a decision. With dignity, and in the supreme consciousness of his rights and position, the Pope reminded the Emperor that a Council had long since been summoned (above, vol. iii., p. 424) and was only being delayed on account of the war. It did not become the civil power, nor even the Emperor, to inaugurate the religious settlement, least of all at the expense of the rights of Church and Pope as had been the case; to the Vicar of Christ and the assembly summoned by him it fell to secure the unity of the Church and to lay down the conditions of reunion; yet the civil power had left the Pope in the lurch in his previous endeavours to summon a Council and to establish peace in Germany; "God was his witness that he had nothing more at heart than to see the whole of the noble German people reunited in faith and all charity"; "willingly would he spend life and blood, as his conscience bore him witness, in the attempt to bring this about in the right way."[2]

These admonitions fell on deaf ears, as the evil work was already done. The consent, which, by dint of defiance and determination, the Protestant princes wrung from Empire and Emperor, secured the triumph of the religious revolution in ever wider circles.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 75 ff. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 91 ff.

[2] Letter to the Emperor Charles V, Aug. 24, 1544, in Raynaldus, "Annales," a. 1544; in German in "Luthers Werke," Walch's ed., 17, p. 1253 ff. For the former attitude of the Papacy to the idea of the Council, cp. our vol. iii., p. 424 ff.

2. Sad Forebodings

In spite of all his outward success, Luther, at the height of his triumph, was filled with melancholy forebodings concerning the future of his work.

He felt more and more that the new Churches then being established lacked inward stability, and that the principle on which they were built was wanting in unity, cohesion and permanence. Neither for the protection of the faith nor for the maintenance of an independent system of Church government were the necessary provisions forthcoming. Indeed, owing to the very nature of his undertaking, it was impossible that such could be effectually supplied ; thus a vision of coming disunion, particularly in the domain of doctrine, unrolled itself before his eyes ; this was one of the factors which saddened him.

As early as the 'thirties we find him giving vent to his fears of an ever-increasing disintegration. In the 'forties they almost assume the character of definite prophecies.

In the Table-Talk of 1538, which was noted down by the Deacon Lauterbach, he seeks comfort in the thought that every fresh revival of religion had been accompanied by quarrels due to false brethren, by heresies and decay ; it was true that now "the morning star had arisen" owing to his preaching, but he feared "that this light would not endure for long, not for more than fifty years" ; the Word of God would "again decline for want of able ministers of the Word."[1] "There will come want and spiritual famine" ; "many new interpretations will arise, and the Bible will no longer hold. Owing to the sects that will spring up I would rather I had not printed my books."[2]

"I fear that the best is already over and that now the sects will follow."[3] The pen was growing heavy to his fingers ; there "will be no end to the writings," he says ; "I have outlived three frightful storms, Münzer, the Sacramentarians and the Anabaptists ; these are over, but now others will come." "I wish not to live any longer since no peace is to be hoped for."[4] "The Evangel is endangered by the sectarians, the revolutionary peasants and the belly servers, just as once the Roman empire was at Rome."[5]

"On June 27 [1538]," we read, "Dr. Luther and Master Philip were dining together at his house. They spoke much, with many a sigh, of the coming times when many dangers would arise." The greatest confusion would prevail. No one would then allow

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 172 f.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 62.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 70.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 114.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 80.

himself to be guided by the doctrine or authority of another. "Each one will wish to be his own Rabbi, like Osiander and Agricola. From this the worst scandals and the greatest desolation will come. Hence it would be best [one said], that the Princes should forestall it by some council, if only the Papists would not hold back and flee from the light. Master Philip replied: The Pope will never be brought to hold a General Council. . . . Oh, that our Princes and the Estates would bring about a council and some sort of unity in doctrine and worship so as to prevent each one undertaking something on his own account to the scandal of many, as some are already doing. The Church is a spectacle of woe, with so much weakness and scandal heaped upon her."[1]

Shortly after this Luther instituted a comparison—which for him must have been very sad—between the "false Church [of the Pope] which stands erect, a cheerful picture of dignity, strength and holiness," and the Church of Christ "which lies in such misery and ignominy, sin and insignificance as though God had no care for her." He fancied he could find some slight comfort in the Article of the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Church," for, so he observes, "because we don't see it, therefore we believe in it."[2]

In the midst of the great successes of those years he still gives utterance to the gloomiest of predictions for the future of his doctrine, which dissensions would eat to the very core. His pupil Mathesius reports him as holding forth as follows:

"Alas, good God," he groaned in 1540, "how we have to suffer from divisions! . . . And many more sects will come. For the spirit of lies and murder does not sleep. . . . But God will save His Christendom."[3]—In 1542 someone remarked in his presence: "Were the world to last fifty years longer many things would happen." Thereupon Luther interjected: "God forbid, things would get worse than ever before; for many sects will arise which yet are hidden in men's hearts, so that we shall not know how we stand. Hence, dear Lord, come with Thy Judgment Day, for no further improvement is now to be looked for!"[4]—After instancing the principal sects that had arisen up to that time he said, in 1540: "After our death many sects will arise, God help us!"[5] "But whoever after my death despises the authority of this school—so long as the Church and the school remain as they are—is a heretic and an evil man. For in this school [of Wittenberg] God has revealed His Word, and this school and town can take a place side by side with any others in the matter of doctrine and life, even though our life be not yet quite above reproach. . . . Those who flee from us and secretly contemn us have denied the faith. . . . Who knew anything five-and-twenty

[1] *Ib.*, p. 91 f. Cp. "Colloq." ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 90 *sq.*; "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 42 f.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 101.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 138.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 287.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 231.

years ago [before my preaching started] ? Alas for ambition ; it is the cause of all the misfortunes."[1]

Frequently he reverts to the theory, that the Church must needs put up with onsets and temptations to despair. "Now even greater despair has come upon us on account of the sectarians," he said in 1537 ; "the Church is in despair according to the words of the Psalmist (cviii. 92) : 'Unless Thy Law had been my meditation I had then perhaps perished in my abjection.'"[2]

At an earlier period (1531) a sermon of Luther's vividly pictures this despair : "If, in spiritual matters, it comes about, that the devil sows his seed in Christ's kingdom and it springs up both in doctrine and life, then we have a crop of misery and distress. In the preaching it happens, that although God has appointed *one* man and commanded him to preach the Evangel, yet others are found even amongst his pupils who think they know how to do it ten times better than he. . . . Every man wants to be master in doctrine. . . . Now they are saying : 'Why should not we have the Spirit and understand Scripture just as well as anyone else ?' Thus a new doctrine is at once set up and sects are formed. . . . Hence a deadly peril to Christendom ensues, for it is torn asunder and pure doctrine everywhere perishes."[3] Christ had indeed "foretold that this would happen"; true enough, it is not forbidden to anyone "who holds the public office of preacher to judge of doctrine" ; but whoever has not such an office has no right to do so ; if he does this of "his own doctrine and spirit," then "I call such judging of doctrine one of the greatest, most shameful and most wicked vices to be found upon earth, one from which all the factious spirits have arisen."[4]

Duke George of Saxony unfeelingly pointed out to the innovator that his fear, that many, very many indeed, would say : "Do we not also possess the Spirit and understand Scripture as well as you ?" would only too surely be realised.

"What man on earth," wrote the Duke in his usual downright fashion, "ever hitherto undertook a more foolish task than you in seeking to include in your sect all Christians, especially those of the German nation ? Success is as likely in your case as it was in that of those who set about building a tower in Babylonia which was to reach the very heavens ; in the end they had to cease from building, and the result was seventy-two new tongues. The same will befall you ; you also will have to stop, and the result will be seventy-two new sects."[5]

Luther's letters speak throughout in a similar strain of the divisions already existing and the gloomy outlook for the future ; in the 'forties his lamentation over the approach-

[1] *Ib.*, p. 169. [2] *Ib.*, p. 417.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 32, p. 474 ; Erl. ed., 43, p. 263.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 475=264 f.
[5] In the "Antwort auf das Schmähbüchlein," etc., "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 146.

ing calamities becomes, however, even louder than usual in spite of the apparent progress of his cause. Much of what he says puts us vividly in mind of Duke George's words just quoted.

Amidst the excitement of his struggle with the fanatics he wrote as early as 1525 to the "Christians at Antwerp": "The tiresome devil begins to rage amongst the ungodly and to belch forth many wild and mazy beliefs and doctrines. This man will have nothing of baptism, that one denies the Sacrament, a third awaits another world between this and the Last Day; some teach that Christ is not God; some say this, some that, and there are as many sects and beliefs as there are heads; no peasant is so rude but that if he dreams or fancies something, it must forsooth be the Holy Spirit which inspires him, and he himself must be a prophet."[1]

After the bitter experiences of the intervening years we find in a letter of 1536 this bitter lament: "Pray for me that I too may be delivered from certain ungodly men, seeing you rejoice that God has delivered you from the Anabaptists and the sects. For new prophets are constantly arising against me one after the other, so that I almost wish to be dissolved in order not to see such evils without end, and to be set free at last from this kingdom of the devil."[2]

Even in the strong pillars of the Evangel, in the Landgrave of Hesse and Bucer the theologian, he apprehended treason to his cause and complains of them as "false brethren." At the time of the negotiations at Ratisbon, in 1541, he exclaims in a letter to Melanchthon: "They are making advances to the Emperor and to our foes, and look on our cause as a comedy to be played out among the people, though as is evident it is a tragedy between God and Satan in which Satan's side has the upper hand and God's comes off second best. . . . I say this with anger and am incensed at their games. But so it must be; the fact that we are endangered by false brethren likens us to the Apostle Paul, nay, to the whole Church, and is the sure seal that God stamps upon us."[3]

In spite of this "seal of God," he is annoyed to see how his Evangel becomes the butt of "heretical attacks" from within, and suffers from the disintegrating and destructive influence of the immorality and godlessness of many of his followers.

This, for instance, he bewails in a letter of condolence sent in 1541 to Wenceslaus Link of Nuremberg. At Nuremberg accord-

[1] April, 1525, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 547; Erl. ed., 53, p. 342 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 151).

[2] To the Preacher Balthasar Raida of Hersfeld, Jan. 17, 1536, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 288.

[3] April 4, 1541, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 291.

ing to Link's account the evil seemed to be assuming a menacing shape. Not the foe without, writes Luther, but rather "our great gainsayers within, who repay us with contempt, are the danger we must fear, according to the words of the common prophecy: 'After Antichrist has been revealed men will come who say: There is no God!' This we see everywhere fulfilled to-day. . . . They think our words are but human words!"[1]

About this time he often contemplates with sadness the abundance of other crying disorders in his Churches,[2] the wantonness of the great and the decadence of the people; he cries: "Hasten, O Jesus, Thy coming; the evils have come to a head and the end cannot be delayed. Amen."[3] "I am sick of life if this life can be called life. . . . Implacable hatred and strife amongst the great . . . no hopes of any improvement . . . the age is Satan's own; gladly would I see myself and all my people quickly snatched from it!"[4] The evil spirit of apostasy and fanatism which had raged so terribly at Münster, was now, according to him, particularly busy amongst the great ones, just as formerly it had laid hold on the peasants. "May God prevent him and resist him, the evil spirit, for truly he means mischief."[5]

And yet he still in his own way hopes in God and clings to the idea of his call; God will soon mock at the devil: "The working of Satan is patent, but God at Whom they now laugh will mock at Satan in His own time."[6]

We can understand after such expressions descriptive of his state of mind, the assurance with which, for all his confidence of victory, he frequently seems to forecast the certain downfall of his cause. In the German Table-Talk, for instance, we read: "So long as those who are now living and who teach the Word of God diligently are still with us, those who have seen and heard me, Philip, Pomeranus and other pious, faithful and honest teachers, all may be well; but when they all are gone and this age is over, there will be a falling away."[7] He also sees how two great and widely differing parties will arise among his followers: unbelievers on the one hand and Pietists and fanatics on the other; we have a characteristic prophecy of the sort where he says of the one party, that, like the Epicureans, they would

[1] To Wenceslaus Link, Sep. 8, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 398.

[2] To the Elector Johann Frederick, Jan. 18, 1545, *ib.*, p. 716: "I will have them [the lawyers] eternally damned and cursed *in my* Churches."

[3] To Justus Jonas, Dec. 16, 1543, *ib.*, p. 612.

[4] To Jacob Probst, Dec. 5, 1544, *ib.*, p. 703.

[5] To Amsdorf, Jan. 8, 1546, *ib.*, p. 773 f.

[6] *Ib.*, p. 774.

[7] Cp. (E. v. Jarcke) "Studien und Skizzen z. Gesch. d. Ref.," 1846, p. 68.

acknowledge "no God or other life after this," and of the other, that many people would come out of the school of enthusiasm, "following their own ideas and speculations and boasting of the Spirit"; "drunk with their own virtues and having their understanding darkened," they would "obstinately insist on their own fancies and yield to no one."[1]

And again he says sadly: "God will sweep His threshing-floor. I pray that after my death my wife and children may not long survive me; very dangerous times are at hand."[2] "I pray God," he frequently said, "to take away this our generation with us, for, when once we are gone, the worst of times will follow."[3] The preacher, "M. Antonius Musa once said," so he recalls: "We old preachers only vex the world, but on you young ones the world will pour out its wrath; therefore take heed to yourselves."[4]

This is not the place to investigate historically the fulfilment of these predictions. We shall content ourselves with quoting, in connection with Musa, the words of another slightly later preacher. Cyriacus Spangenberg saw in Luther a prophet, for one reason because his gloomiest predictions were being fulfilled before the eyes of all. In the third sermon of his book, "Luther the Man of God," he shows to what frightful contempt the preachers of Luther's unadulterated doctrine were everywhere exposed, just as he himself (Spangenberg) was hated and persecuted for being over-zealous for the true faith of the "Saint" of Wittenberg. "Ah," he says in a sermon in 1563 couched in Luther's style, "Shame on thy heart, thy neck, thy tongue, thou filthy and accursed world. Thy blasphemy, fornication, unchastity, gluttony and drunkenness . . . are not thought too much; but that such should be scolded is too much. . . . If this be not the devil himself, then it is something very like him and is assuredly his mother."[5]

3. Provisions for the Future

Luther failed to make the effectual and systematic efforts called for in order to stave off the fate to which he foresaw his work would be exposed. He was not the man to put

[1] *Ib.* [2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 158. [3] *Ib.*, p. 198.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 200. [5] "Theander Lutherus," Ursel s.a., Bl. 59′.

matters in order, quite apart from the unsurmountable difficulties this would have involved, seeing he possessed little talent for organisation. He was very well aware that one expedient would be to surrender church government almost entirely into the hands of the secular authorities.

A Protestant Council?

The negotiations which preceded the Œcumenical Council of the Catholic Church, had for one result not only to impress the innovators with a sense of their own unsettled state, but to lead them to discuss the advisability of holding a great Protestant council of their own. Luther himself, however, wisely held aloof from such a plan, nay his opposition to it was one of the main obstacles which prevented its fulfilment.

When the idea was first mooted in 1533 it was rejected by Luther and his theologians Jonas, Bugenhagen and Melanchthon in a joint memorandum. "Because it is plain," so they declare, "that we ourselves are not at one, and must first of all consider how we are to arrive at unity amongst ourselves. In short, though an opposition council might be good and useful it is needless to speak of such a thing just now."[1]

In 1537 the Landgrave of Hesse, and more particularly the Elector of Saxony, again proposed at Schmalkalden that Luther, following the example of the Greeks and the Bohemians, should summon a council of his own, a national Evangelical council, to counteract the Papal Council.[2] The Elector proposed that it should be assembled at Augsburg and comprise at least 250 preachers and men of the law; the Emperor might be invited to attend and a considerable army was also to be drafted to Augsburg for the protection of the assembly. At that time Luther's serious illness saved him from an embarrassing situation.

Bucer and Melanchthon were now the sole supporters of

[1] After June 16, 1533, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 20. ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 312.) The passage in question in the original at Weimar is in Melanchthon's handwriting. Cp. Enders, p. 313, on the historical connection of the memorandum.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 139 *sqq.* Rommel, "Philipp von Hessen," 1, p. 417. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), vol. v., p. 527 ff. Pastor, "Die kirchl. Reunionsbestrebungen während der Regierung Karls V," p. 95.

the plan of a council. Both were men who believed in mediation and Melanchthon may really have hoped for a while, that the "philosophy of dissimulation," for which he stood,[1] might, even in a council, palliate the inward differences and issue in something tolerably satisfactory. Luther himself was never again to refer to the Evangelical Council.

It was the theologians headed by Martin Bucer, who, at the Diet of Schmalkalden in 1540 at which Luther was not present, lodged a memorandum on the advisability of holding a council. The petitioners declared it "very useful and called for, both for the saving of unity in doctrine and for the bettering of many other things, that, every one or two years, the Estates should convene a synod; Visitors chosen there were to "silence any errors in doctrine" that they might discover.[2] The Estates, however, did not agree to this proposal; it was easy to foresee that it would be unworkable and productive of evil. It was only necessary to call to mind the fruitlessness of the great assemblies at Cassel and Wittenberg which had brought about the so-called Wittenberg Concord and the disturbances to which the Concord gave rise.[3]

Bucer keenly regreted the absence of any ecclesiastical unity and cohesion amongst his friends.

"Not even a shadow of it remains," so he wrote to Bullinger. "Every church stands alone and every preacher for himself. Not a few shun all connection with their brethren and any discussion of the things of Christ. It is just like a body the members of which are cut off and where one cannot help the other. Yet the spirit of Christ is a spirit of harmony; Christ wills that His people should be one, as He and the Father are one, and that they love one another as He loved us. . . . Unless we become one in the Lord every effort at mending and reviving morals is bound to be useless. For this reason," he continues, "it was the wish of Œcolampadius when the faith was first preached at Basle, to see the congregations represented and furthered by synods. But he was not successful even amongst us [who stood nearest to him in the faith]. I cannot say that to-day there is any more possibility of establishing this union of the Churches; but the real cause of our decline certainly lies in this inability. Possibly, later on, others may succeed where we failed. For, truly, what we have received of the knowledge of Christ and of discipline will fade away unless we, who are Christ's, unite ourselves more closely as members of His Body."

He proceeds to indicate plainly that one of the main obstacles

[1] To Brenz, April 14, 1537, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 340: "*Ulyssea philosophia . . . multa dissimulantes.*"

[2] Letter of March 10, 1540, in Bindseil, "Melanchthonis epistolæ, iudicia, etc.," 1874, p. 146.

[3] Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 421 ff.

to such a union was Luther's rude and offensive behaviour towards the Swiss theologians: Luther had undoubtedly heaped abuse on "guiltless brethren." But with this sort of thing, inevitable in his case, it would be necessary to put up. "Will it not be better for us to let this pass than to involve so many Churches in even worse scandals? Could I, without grave damage to the Churches, do something to stop all this vituperation, then assuredly I should not fail to do so."[1]

Unfortunately the peacemaker's efforts could avail nothing against a personality so imperious and ungovernable as Luther's.

Bucer continued nevertheless to further the idea of a Protestant council, though, so long as Luther lived, only with bated breath. He endeavoured at least to interest the Landgrave of Hesse in his plan for holding small synods of theologians.

It was the want of unity in the matter of doctrine and the visible decline of discipline that drove him again and again to think of this remedy. On Jan. 8, 1544, he wrote to Landgrave Philip: In so many places there is "no profession of faith, no penalties, no excommunication of those who sin publicly, nor yet any Visitation or synod. Only what the lord or burgomaster wished was done, and, in place of one Pope, many Popes have arisen and things become worse and worse from day to day." He reminds the Prince of the proposal made at Schmalkalden; because nothing was done to put this in effect, scandals were on the increase. "We constantly find that scarcely a third or fourth part communicate with Christ. What sort of Christians will there be eventually?"[2]—In the same way he tells him later: Because no synods are held "many things take place daily which ought really greatly to trouble all of us."[3] In Würtemberg and in some of the towns of Swabia the authorities were dissuaded by the groundless fear lest the preachers should once more gain too much influence; this was why the secular authorities were averse to synods and Visitations; but "on this account daily arise gruesome divisions in matters of doctrine and unchastity of life; we find some who are daily maddened with drink and who give such scandal in other matters that the enemies of Christ have a terrible excuse for blaspheming and hindering our true Gospel. . . . At the last Schmalkalden meeting all the preachers were anxious that synods and Visitations should be ordered and held everywhere. But who has paid any heed to this?" And yet this is the best means whereby "our holy religion might be preserved and guarded from the new Papists amongst us, i.e. those who do not accept the Word of God in its purity and entirety, but explain it away, pull it to pieces, distort and bend it as their own sensual passions and temptations move them."[4]

Once the main obstacle had been removed by Luther's death,

[1] Letter of Dec. 28, 1543, in Lenz, "Briefwechsel des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen," 2, p. 227. "*Nihil est quod minus multum* [read *inultum*] *relinquerem.*"

[2] Lenz, *ib.*, p. 241. [3] Letter of Feb. 25, 1545, Lenz, p. 304.

[4] Letter of Dec. 1, 1545, Lenz, p. 379.

Bucer, who was very confident of his own abilities, again mooted the idea of a great council. In the same letter to Landgrave Philip of Hesse in which he refers to the death of Luther, "the father and teacher of us all," which had occurred shortly before, he exhorts the Landgrave more emphatically than ever to co-operate, so that "first of all a general synod may be held of our co-religionists of every estate," to which all the sovereigns should despatch eminent preachers and councillors—i.e. be formally convened by the secular authorities—and, that, subsequently "particular synods be held in every country of the Churches situated there."[1] "Short of this the Churches will assuredly fare badly."[2]

The Landgrave was not averse, yet the matter never got any further. The terrible quarrels amongst the theologians in the camp of the new faith after Luther's decease[3] put any general Protestant council out of the question.

We can imagine what such a council would have become, if, in addition to the theologians, the lay element had been represented to the extent demanded at a certain Disputation held at Wittenberg under Luther's presidency in 1543.[4] From the idea of the whole congregation taking its share in the government of the Church, Luther could never entirely shake himself free. Nevertheless it is probable, that, in spite of this Disputation, he had not really changed his mind as to the impossibility of an Evangelical council.

If, with Luther's, we compare Melanchthon's attitude towards the question of a Lutheran council we find that the latter's wish for such a council and his observations about it afforded him plentiful opportunity for voicing his indignation at the religious disruption then rampant.[5]

"Weak consciences are troubled," he said in 1536, "and know not which sect to follow; in their perplexity they begin to despair of religion altogether."[6]—"Violent sermons, which promote lawlessness and break down all barriers against the passions, are listened to greedily. Such

[1] Letter of April 5, 1546, Lenz, p. 426 f.
[2] Letter of May 12, 1545, Lenz, p. 433.
[3] See below, vol. vi., xl., 3.
[4] Seckendorf, "Comm. hist. de Lutheranismo," 3, Lips., 1694, p. 468. The disputant, Johannes Marbach, received from Luther this testimony: "*Amplectitur puram evangelii doctrinam, quam ecclesia nostra uno spiritu et una voce profitetur.*" "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 543. Cp. Disputationen, ed. Drews, p. 700 ff. Some of Luther's other statements concerning unity ring very differently.
[5] Cp. vol. iii., pp. 324, 363, 371 f.
[6] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 230; "*Incipiunt de tota religione dubitare.*"

preaching, more worthy of cynics than of Christians, it is which thunders forth the false doctrine that good works are not called for. Posterity will marvel that there should ever have been an age when such madness was received with applause."[1]—" Had you made the journey with us," he writes on his return from a visit to the Palatinate and Swabia, " and, like us, seen the woeful desolation of the Churches in so many places, you would doubtless long with tears and sighs that the Princes and the learned should confer together how best to come to the help of the Churches."[2] —Later again we read in his letters : " Behold how great is everywhere the danger to the Churches and how difficult their government ; for everywhere those in the ministry quarrel amongst themselves and set up strife and division." " We live like the nomads, no one obeys any man in anything whatsoever."[3]

Two provisions suggested by Luther for the future in lieu of the impracticable synods were, the establishment of national consistories and the use of a sort of excommunication.

Luther's Attitude towards the Consistories introduced in 1539

With strange resignation Luther sought to persuade himself that, even without the help of any synods and general laws, it would still be possible to re-establish order by means of a certain supervision to be exercised with the assistance of the State, backed by the penalty of exclusion. Against laws and regulations for the guidance of the Church's life, he displayed an ever-growing prejudice, the reason for this being partly his peculiar ideas on the abrogation of all governing authority of the Church, partly the experiences with which he had met.

" So long as the sense of unity is not well rooted in the heart and mind "—he wrote in 1545, i.e. after the establishment of the consistories—" outward unity is not of much use, nor will it last long. . . . The existing observances [in matters of worship] must not become laws. On the con-

[1] " Pezelii Object. et resp. Melanchtonis," P. V., p. 289. Döllinger, " Die Reformation," 1, p. 373.
[2] Nov., 1536, to Myconius, " Corp. ref.," 3, p. 187.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 460, 488 (1537 and 1538).

trary, just as the schoolmaster and father of the family rule without laws, and, in the school and in the home, correct faults, so to speak only by supervision, so, in the same way, in the Church, everything should be done by means of supervision, but not by rules for the future. . . . Everything depends on the minister of the Word being prudent and faithful. For this reason we prefer to insist on the erection of schools, but above all on that purity and uniformity of doctrine which unites minds in the Lord. But, alas, there are too few who devote themselves to study; many are just bellies and no more, intent on their daily bread. . . . Time, however, will mend much that it is impossible to settle beforehand by means of regulations."[1]

"If we make laws," he continues, "they become snares for consciences and pure doctrine is obscured and set aside, particularly if those who come after are careless and unlearned. . . . Already during our lifetime we have seen sects and dissensions enough under our very noses, how each one follows his own way. In short, contempt for the Word on our side and blasphemy on the other [Catholic] side proclaim loudly enough the advent of the Last Day. Hence, above all, let us have pure and abundant preaching of the Word! The ministers of the Word must first of all become one heart and one soul. For if we make laws our successors will lay claim to the same authority, and, fallen human nature being what it is, the result will be a war of the flesh against the flesh."[2]

In other words Luther foresaw a war of all against all as likely sooner or later to be the result of any thoroughgoing attempt to regulate matters by means of laws as the Catholics did in their councils. He and his friends were persuaded that laws could only be made effectual by virtue of the power of the State.

Melanchthon declared: "Unless the Court supports our arrangements, what else will they become but Platonic laws, to use a Greek saying?"[3]

The idea to which Luther had clung so long as there was any hope, viz. to make the congregations self-governing, was but a fanciful and impracticable one; when again, little by little, he came to seek support from the secular authority,

[1] To Prince George of Anhalt, June 10, 1545, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 379. [2] *Ib.* [3] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 907.

he did so merely under compulsion ; he felt it to involve a repudiation of his own principles, nor could he control his jealousy when the far-reaching interference of the State speedily became manifest.

In the Saxon electorate the consistories had been introduced in 1539, not so much at the instance of Luther as of the committee representing the Estates. They were to deal with ecclesiastical affairs and disputes, with complaints against, and grievances of, the clergy, but chiefly with the matrimonial cases. The earlier " Visitors " had lacked executive powers. The consistory established by the Elector at Wittenberg for the whole electorate was composed of two preachers (Jonas and Agricola), and two lawyers. Luther raised many objections, particularly to the consistory's proposed use of excommunication ; he feared that, unless they stuck to his theological views, the consistories would lead to " yet another scrimmage." Later, however, he gave the new organisation his support. It was not till 1541 that the work of the consistories was more generally extended.[1]

Luther consoled himself and Spalatin as follows for the loss of dignity which they apprehended : " The consistory will deal only with matrimonial cases, with which we no longer will or can have any more to do ; also with the bringing back of the peasants to some sort of discipline and the payment of stipends to the preachers."[2]

For the Wittenberg consistory to relieve him of the matrimonial cases was in many respects just what he desired. He had himself frequently dealt with these cases according to the dictates of his own ever-changing views on marriage, so far as he was allowed by his frequent quarrels with the lawyers who questioned his right to interfere. He now declared : " I am glad that the consistoria have been established, especially on account of the matrimonial cases."[3] As early as 1536, he had written : " The peasants and rude populace who seek nothing but the freedom of the flesh, and likewise the lawyers, who, whenever possible, oppose our decisions, have wearied me so much that I have flung aside the matrimonial cases and written to some telling them that they may do just as they please in the name of all the devils ; let the dead bury their dead ; for though I give much advice, I cannot help the people when afterwards they are

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, pp. 441, 574.

[2] To Spalatin, Jan. 12, 1541. " Briefwechsel," 13, p. 246. " Spalatin foresaw what was to come better than did Luther." K. Holl, " Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment," 1911, p. 57.

[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 223, Table-Talk.

robbed and teased [by the lawyers]. If the world will have the Pope then let it have him if otherwise it cannot be."

"So far I have not found one single lawyer," he continues, speaking of a certain matrimonial question, "who would hold with me against the Pope in this or any similar case. . . . We theologians know nothing, and are not supposed to count."[1]

It was in part nausea and wounded vanity, in part also his abhorrence for the ecclesiastical and sacramental side of marriage which caused him repeatedly to declare: "I would we were rid of the matrimonial business";[2] "marriage and all its circumstances is a political affair" (both statements date from 1538);[3] "leave the matrimonial cases to the secular authorities, for they concern, not the conscience, but the external law of the Princes and magistrates" (1532).[4]

Of the ecclesiastical powers of the sovereign he declared however (1539), "We must make the best of him as bishop, since no other bishop will help us."[5]

"But if things come to such a pass that the Courts try to rule as they please," so he wrote at a time when this principle had already begun to bear its bitter fruit, "then the last state will be worse than the first . . . in that case let the Lords themselves be our pastors and preachers, let them baptise, visit the sick, give communion and perform all the other offices of the Church! Otherwise let them stop confusing the two callings, attend to their own Courts and leave the Churches to the clergy. . . . It is Satan who in our day is seeking to introduce into the Church the counsels and the authority of the government officials; we shall, however, resist him and keep the two callings separate."[6]

Yet the "two callings," the secular and the ecclesiastical, were to become more and more closely intermingled. As was inevitable, the weak spiritual authority set up by Luther was soon absorbed by a strong secular authority well aware of its own aims; the secular power treated the former as its sacristan charged with carrying out the services of the Church, and gradually assumed exclusive control, even in matters of doctrine. A moral servitude such as had never been seen at any period in the history of the German Church was the consequence of the State government of the Church, brought about by the consistories.

[1] To Count Albert of Mansfeld, Oct. 5, 1536, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 147 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 90). Cp. above, vol. iii., 38 f., 263 f.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 121.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 152.

[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 82.

[5] To the Visitors in Thuringia, March 25, 1539, "Briefe," 5, p. 173 ("Briefwechsel," 12, p. 118).

[6] To Daniel Cresser, Oct. 22, 1543, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 596, concerning certain occurrences at Dresden.

In order to understand Luther's attitude towards the consistories and to gauge rightly his responsibility, some further particulars of their rise and earliest form are called for.

In 1537 the "Great Committee of the Torgau district" demanded, that the Elector should establish four consistories in his lands. On these would devolve the looking after of "all *ecclesiasticæ causæ*, the preaching office, the churches and ministers, their vindication *contra injurias*, all that concerned their conduct and life, and particularly the matrimonial suits." Some such court was essential in the case of these suits, because, since the dissolution of the bishops' courts, the utmost disorders had prevailed and nobody even knew by which code the questions pending were to be judged, whether by the old canon law with which the lawyers were familiar, or according to the doctrine and statutes of Luther which were quite a different thing. The disciplinary system too had become so lax that some revision of the Church judiciary appeared inevitable.

As for the principles which were to direct the new organisation: Luther was inclined at times to be forgetful of his theory, that his Churches should have no canon law of their own;[1] even at this grave crisis he does not seem to have been distinctly conscious of it; at the same time his jealousy made him unwilling to see all the authority for governing the new Churches conferred directly by the State, though, with his usual frankness, he admitted it was impossible for things to continue as they were. The most influential men of his circle were, however, determined to have so-called ecclesiastical courts introduced by the sovereign, which should then govern in his name; hitherto, they urged, it was the purely secular courts which had intervened, which was a mistake, as had been shown in practice by their failure. Thus, as R. Sohm put it, "did Melanchthon's ideas, from about 1537, gradually oust those of Luther in the government of the Lutheran Church."[2]

It was from this standpoint that, in his Memorandum of 1538 addressed to the Elector, Jonas, the lawyer and theologian, supported the above-mentioned proposal of the Torgau assembly. He points out that "the common people become daily more savage and uncouth," and that "no Christian Church can hope to stand where such rudeness and lawlessness prevail." According to him the authority of the consistories was to embrace the whole domain of Church government. They were, however, to derive their authority direct from the sovereign, "through, and by order of, the prince of the land." Hence "their *iudices* were to have the right to enforce their decisions"; they were to be in a position to wield the Greater Excommunication with its temporal consequences, also to inflict bodily punishment, fines and "suitable terms of imprisonment," and therefore to have "men-at-arms" and "a prison" at their disposal.[3]

Jonas and those who agreed with him fancied that what they

[1] See above p. 55, ff., and vol. ii., p. 298.
[2] "Kirchenrecht," 1, 1892, p. 613. [3] R. Sohm, *ib.*, p. 615.

were setting up with the help of the secular power was a spiritual court; in reality, however, they were advocating a purely secular, coercive institution.

Luther's views differed from those of his friends in so far as he wished to see the new courts—which he frowned at and distrusted—merely invested with full powers for dealing with matrimonial suits; even here, however, he made a reservation, insisting on the abrogation of canon law. The Elector's edict of 1539 appointing the consistories, out of consideration for Luther, was worded rather vaguely. The consistories were, "until further notice," to see to the "ecclesiastical affairs" which "have occurred so far or shall yet occur and be brought to your cognisance."[1] According to this their authority was received only "until further notice" from the ruler, to whom it fell to bring cases to their "cognisance," and, who, naturally kept the execution of the sentence in his own hands.

Luther, it is true, accepted the new arrangement, because, as he said, it represented a "Church court" which could take over the matrimonial cases. But forthwith he found himself in conflict with the lawyers attached to the courts because they insisted on taking their stand on canon law. To his very death, even in his public utterances, he lashed the men of the law for thus submitting themselves to the Pope and to the code against which his life's struggle had been directed. Yet the lawyers were driven to make use of the old statutes, since they alone afforded a legal basis, and because Luther's propositions to the contrary—on secret marriages, for instance—lacked any general recognition. The result of Luther's opposition to the consistories was, that, so long as he lived, they remained without any definite instructions, devoid of the authority which had been promised them, and without the coercive powers they so much needed; for the nonce they were spiritual courts without any outward powers of compulsion, the latter being retained by the sovereign to use at his discretion.

After Luther's death things were changed. The consistories both in the Saxon Electorate and in most other places where they had been copied became exclusively organs of Church government by the State, though still composed of theologians and lawyers. In 1579 and 1580 the end which Luther had foreseen arrived. "The last things became, as a matter of fact, worse than the first," as he himself had predicted, nay, as the result of his own action; Satan has introduced "into the Church the counsels and the authority of government officials" (above, p. 182).

This change, which in reality was the realisation of the ideas of Jonas, Melanchthon and Chancellor Brück, leads Rud. Sohm, after having portrayed in detail the circumstances, to exclaim: "The sovereign as head of the Church! How can such a thing be even imagined? The Church of Christ, governed solely by the word of Christ . . . and by command of the ruler of the land."[2] Speaking of the disorder in Luther's Church, which

[1] *Ib.*, p. 623. [2] *Ib.*, p. 618.

recognised no canon law, the Protestant canonist says : " Canon law was needed to assist the Word ; well, it came, but only to establish the lord of the land as lord also of the Church." " The State government of the Church is in contradiction with the Lutheran profession of faith." " If, however, the Church is determined to be ruled by force, then the ruler must be the secular authority."[1]

The secular authorities to which Protestantism looked for support had been well organised throughout the Empire by the League of Schmalkalden. Subsequent to 1535 the warlike alliance had been extended for a further ten years. In 1539 the state of things became so threatening, that Luther feared lest the Catholic princes should attack the Protestants. In a sermon he referred to the " fury of Satan amongst the blinded Papists who incite the Emperor and other kings against the Evangel " ; he, however, also added, that " we, by our boundless malice and ingratitude, have called down the wrath of God." They ought to pray, " that the Emperor might not turn his arms against us who have the pure Word of Christ."[2] As a matter of fact, however, the Emperor and the Empire were not in a position even to protect themselves against the wanton behaviour of the innovators.

Amongst the outward provisions made for the future benefit of the new Church, the League of Schmalkalden deserves the first place. In the very year before his death Luther took steps to ensure the prolongation of this armed alliance.[3]

Among the efforts made at home to improve matters a place belongs to Luther's attempts to introduce a more frequent use of excommunication.

[1] *Ib.*, p. 632. Sohm's standpoint is, that a Church with powers of self-government or with a " canon law," as he calls it, is practically unthinkable. Cp. Carl Müller, " Die Anfänge der Konsistorialverfassung in Deutschland " (Hist. Zeitschr. Bd. 102, 3. Folge Bd. 6, p. 1 ff.). He too arrives at the conclusion, contrary to many previously held views, viz. that it was only gradually in the course of the 16th century that the consistories changed, from organs of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, into organs of State government of the Church. Cp. also O. Mejer, " Zum KR. des Reformationsjahrh.," 1891, p. 1 ff.

[2] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 66.

[3] " Corp. ref.," 5, p. 720 *sq.* Memorandum as to whether the Schmalkalden League should continue, etc., March, 1545, signed by him first. Cp. " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 374.

Luther seeks to introduce the so-called Lesser Excommunication

The introduction of the ban engrossed Luther's attention more particularly after 1539, but without any special results. In 1541 we find the question raised under rather peculiar circumstances in one of the numerous letters in which Luther complains of the secular authorities. At Nuremberg, Wenceslaus Link had threatened certain persons of standing with excommunication, whereupon one of the town-councillors hurled at him the opprobrious epithet of "priestling." Full of indignation, Luther wrote: "It is true the civil authorities ever have been and always will be enemies of the Church. . . . God has rejected the world and, of the ten lepers, scarcely one takes His side, the rest go over to the prince of this world." "Excommunication is part of the Word of God." If they look upon our preaching as the Word of God then it is a disgrace that they should refuse to hear of excommunication, despise the ministers of the Word and hate the God Whom they have confessed; they wickedly blaspheme in thus hurling the term 'priestling' at His ministers."[1]

Here we get a glimpse of the difficulty which attended the introduction of the ban: "They refuse to hear of excommunication."

With the Greater Excommunication which involved civil disabilities, and in particular exclusion to some extent from social intercourse, Luther had no sympathy; he was interested in the reintroduction merely of the Lesser Excommunication prohibiting the excommunicate to take part in public worship, or at least to receive the Supper or to stand as godparent. In his view the Greater Excommunication was a matter for the sovereign and did not in the least concern the ministers of the Church; this he points out in his Schmalkalden Articles.[2] He even was inclined to look upon any such action of the ruler with a jealous eye; from anything of the sort it were better for the sovereign to abstain

[1] To Wenceslaus Link, Sep. 8, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 399.

[2] Pars 3, art. 9: "*Maiorem excommunicationem, quam papa ita nominat, non nisi civilem poenam esse ducimus non pertinentem ad nos ministros ecclesiæ.*" "Symbol. Bücher," ed. Müller-Kolde[10], p. 323.

for fear of any awkward confusion of the spiritual with the secular power.[1]

The "Unterricht der Visitatorn," printed in 1528, had already suggested to the ministers the use of a kind of Lesser Excommunication, but, in the absence of anything definite, the proposal remained practically a dead letter. We learn, however, that Luther pronounced his first ban of this sort against some alleged witches.[2] Subsequently he had strongly urged at the Court of the Elector that the authorities should at least threaten gross contemners of religion with "exile and punishment" as in the case of blasphemers, and that then the pastors, after instruction and admonition had proved of no avail, should proceed to exclude such men from church membership[3] as "heathen to be shunned." When mentioning this he fails to state whether or to what extent his proposal was carried out.[4] On the other hand, he often declares that the actual state of the masses rendered quite impossible any ordering of ecclesiastical life according to the Gospel; he is also fond of speaking of the danger there would be of falling back into the Popish regulations abolished by the freedom of the Gospel, were disciplinary measures reintroduced.

What moved Luther in 1538 to advocate the use of the ban was, first, the action of the Elector's haughty Captain and Governor, Hans Metzsch at Wittenberg, who, in addition to Luther's excommunication, was threatened with dismissal from his office, or, as Luther expresses it, with the Greater Excommunication of the ruler (1538), and, secondly, the doings of a Wittenberg burgher who (Feb., 1539) dared to go to the Supper in spite of having committed homicide. In the case of Metzsch a form of minor excommunication was resorted to, Luther declaring invalid

[1] To Tileman Schnabel and the other Hessian clergy, June 26, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 317: "*Hoc sæculo excommunicatio maior ne potest quidem in nostram potestatem redigi, et ridiculi fieremus, ante vires, hanc tentantes. Nam quod vos sperare videmini, ut executio vel per ipsum principem fiat, valde incertum est, nec vellem politicum magistratum in id officii misceri,*" etc.

[2] N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess," 1911, p. 32, with reference to "Luthers Werke," Weim. ed., 29, p. 539, where the note of the Wittenberg Deacon, George Rörer to Luther's sermon of Aug. 22 of that year says: "*Hæc prima fuit excommunicatio ab ipso pronuntiata.*"

[3] Luther to Leonhard Beier, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 365.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 275.

the absolution and permission to communicate granted by the Deacon Fröschel; whether or not, after this, he pronounced a further excommunication, this much is certain, viz. that, not long after the pair were reconciled.[1]

Many of the well-disposed on Luther's side were in favour of the ban as a disciplinary measure; others were intensely hostile to it. Of his latest intention, Luther speaks at some length in a sermon of Feb. 23, 1539. He there explains how the whole congregation must be behind the clergy in enforcing the ban; they were to be notified publicly of any man who proved obstinate and were to pray against him; then was to follow the formal expulsion from the congregation; re-admission to public worship was also to take place publicly.

The plan of using the ban as a disciplinary measure was, however, brought to nought by the efforts of the Court and the lawyers, who wished all proceedings of the sort to devolve upon the government as represented in the consistories.[2] Luther also encountered the further difficulty, that, in many cases, the ban was simply ignored, even greater scandal arising out of this public display of contempt. Hence, owing to his experience, he came to enjoin the greatest caution.

To his former pupil, Anton Lauterbach, preacher at Pirna, he sent the following not over-confident instructions: "Hesse's example of the use of excommunication pleases me. If you can establish the same thing, well and good. But the centaurs and harpies of the Court will look at it askance. May the Lord be our help! Everywhere licence and lawlessness continue to spread amongst the people, but it is the fault of the secular authorities."[3]

The example of Hesse to which Luther referred was the Hessian "Regulations for church discipline," enacted in 1539 at the instance of Bucer, in which, amongst other things, provision was made for excommunication. So-called "elders," appointed conjointly by the town authorities and the congregation, were to watch over the faith and morals of all, preachers inclusive; to them, together with the preacher, it fell, after

[1] Cp. the passages quoted, *ib.*, p. 675, and Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 167.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 291 *sqq.* Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 440.

[3] On April 2, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 550. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, pp. 162 ff., 159 f.; "We must set up excommunication again." In the latter passage he speaks of his action against the Wittenberg Commandant, Hans v. Metzsch.

seeking advice of the Superintendent, to pronounce the ban over the obdurate sinner. In the Saxon Electorate, however, so Luther hints, this would hardly be feasible on account of the attitude of the authorities and the utter lawlessness of the people.

In 1538 the Elector himself had well put the difficulty which would face any such disciplinary measure: "If only people could be found who would let themselves be excommunicated!" He had, as Jonas related at Luther's table, listened devoutly to the sermon at Zerbst and then expressed himself strongly on the universal decline in morals, the "outrageous wickedness, gluttony and drunkenness," etc.; he had also said that excommunication was necessary, but had then uttered the despairing words just quoted.[1]

Yet in spite of all Luther still continued at times to hold up the ban and its consequences as a threat: "I shall denounce him from the pulpit as having been placed under the ban"—this of a burgher who had absented himself from the Sacrament for fifteen years—"and will give notice that he is to be looked upon as a dog; if, after this, anyone holds intercourse or has anything to do with him, he will do so at his own risk; if he dies he is to be buried on the rubbish-heap like a dog; we formally make him over to the authorities for their justice and their laws to do their worst on him."[2]—"As for our usurers, drunkards, libertines, whoremongers, blasphemers and scoffers," he says, "they do not require to be put under the ban, as they have done so themselves; they are in it already up to their ears. . . . When they are about to die, no pastor or curate may attend them, and when they are dead let the hangman drag them out of the town to the carrion heap. . . . Since they wish to be heathen, we shall look upon them as such."[3]

Such self-imposed excommunication was so frequent that the other, viz. that to be imposed by the preacher, was but rarely needed.—"This is the true and chief reason why the ban has everywhere fallen into disuse," Luther declares, echoing the Elector, "because real Christians are everywhere so few, so small a body and so insignificant in number."[4] He too could exclaim with a sigh: "If only there were people who would let themselves be banned."

But even had such people been forthcoming, those who would have to pronounce the ban were too often anything but perfect. What was needed was prudent, energetic and disinterested preachers, for, in order "to make use of the ban, we have need of good, courageous, spiritual-minded ministers; we have too many who are immersed in worldly business." "I fear our pastors will be over-bold and grasp at temporalities and at property."[5]

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 42. His words remind us of Luther's own; above, p. 139.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 160.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 179 f. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 185 (in 1540).
[4] *Ib.*, p. 169 f.
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 278 (in 1542–1543).

The want of a Hierarchy. Ordinations

Sebastian Franck of Donauwörth, a man responsible for some fanatical doctrines, but a good observer of events, wrote in 1534 in his " Cosmography " : " Every sect has its own teacher, leader and priest, so that now no one can write of the German faith, and a whole volume would be necessary, and indeed would not suffice, to enumerate all their sects and beliefs." " Men will and must have a Pope," he says, " they will steal one or dig one out of the earth, and if you take one from them every day they will soon find a new one."[1]

It was not, however, exactly a " Pope " that the various sects desired ; the great and commanding name of the author of the schism could endure none other beside it, quite apart from the impossibility of anything of the sort being realised. On the other hand, the appointment of bishops to the new Churches, i.e. the introduction of a kind of hierarchy, had been discussed since about 1540.

Luther saw well enough what a firm foundation the Church of the " Papists " possessed in its episcopate. Would not the introduction of eminent Lutheran preachers into the old German episcopal sees and their investment with the secular authority and quality of bishops, serve to strengthen the cause of the Evangel where it was weakest ? The Superintendents did not suffice, though these officers, first introduced in the Saxon Visitation of 1527, held a post of supervision duly recognised in the Church.

" The Papists boast of their bishops," said Luther, " and of their spiritual authority though it is contrary to God's ordinances."[2] " They are all set on retaining the bishops, and simply want to reform them."[3] " In Germany the bishops are wealthy and powerful, they have a position and authority and they rule of their own power."[4] " If only we had one or two bishops on our side, or could induce them to come over to us ! "[5]

On Ascension Day, May 15, 1539, we are told that " Luther dined with his Elector and assisted at a council. It was there resolved to maintain the bishops in their authority, if only they would renounce the Pope and were pious persons devoted to the Gospel, like Speratus. In that case, said Luther, we shall grant

[1] " Kosmographie," Bl. 44', 163. Janssen, " Hist. of the German People " (Engl. Trans.), v., p. 535.
[2] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 122. [3] *Ib.*, 1, p. 322.
[4] *Ib.*, 3, p. 306. [5] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 367, Table-Talk.

them the right and the power to ordain ministers. When Melanchthon attempted to dissuade him, pointing out that it would be difficult to make sure of them by examination, he replied: "They are to be tested by our people and then consecrated by the laying on of hands, just as I am now a bishop."[1] Instead of the words "as I am now a bishop" a more likely rendering is, "as we have already done as bishops here at Wittenberg."[2] The resolution indicated would seem to have been merely provisional and non-committal, possibly a mere project. Nor is it likely that Melanchthon can have been very averse to it.

As a matter of fact, Luther had, like a bishop, already ordained or inducted into office such men as had been "called" to the ministry, viz. by the congregations or the authorities; this he did for the first time in 1525 in the case of George Rörer, who had been called to the archdiaconate of Wittenberg. The ordination took place with imposition of hands and prayer. Since 1535 there existed a Wittenberg oath of ordination to be taken by the preachers and pastors who should be appointed, by which they bound themselves to preserve and to teach the "Catholic" faith as taught at Wittenberg.[3]

Luther did not think that any consecration at the hands of the existing episcopate was necessary for a new bishop;[4] such necessity was incompatible with his conception of the Church, the hierarchy and the common priesthood; as for the Sacrament of Orders in the usual sense of the word, it no longer existed.

A welcome opportunity for setting up a Protestant "bishop" was presented to the Elector of Saxony and to Luther when the bishopric of Naumburg-Zeitz fell vacant (above, p. 165 f.).

Johann Frederick, the Elector, not satisfied with his rights as protector, laid claim also to actual sovereignty, and as the innovations had, as stated above, already secured a footing in Naumburg, he determined to introduce a Lutheran preacher as bishop and to seize upon the rights and lands in spite of the Chapter and larger part of the nobility still being true to the Catholic faith. He appealed to the fact that the kings of England, Denmark and Sweden, and likewise the Duke of Prussia, had set their bishops in "order."[5] The noble and scholarly Julius Pflug, whom wisely the Chapter at once elected to the vacant see, was, as related above, never to be allowed to ascend the episcopal throne.

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 306. In the statement the year given is uncertain. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 368: "*Anno* 34," etc.; elsewhere 1543. [2] Rebenstock, in Bindseil, l. c.

[3] P. Drews, "Die Ordination, Prüfung und Lehrverpflichtung der Ordinanden in Wittenberg" ("Deutsche Zeitschr. für KR."), 15, 1905, pp. 66 ff., 274 ff., particularly p. 281 ff.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 22 f. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 80: "*Doctor dixit: Nos qui prædicamus Evangelium, habemus potestatem ordinandi; papa et episcopi neminem possunt ordinare*" (a. 1540). P. 226: "*Doctor ad Cellarium; Vos estis episcopus, quemadmodum ego sum papa*" (a. 1540). Johannes Cellarius was Superintendent at Dresden. [5] Janssen, *ib.* (Engl. Trans.), vi., 181 ff.

4. Consecration of Nicholas Amsdorf as "Evangelical Bishop" of Naumburg (1542)

At first Luther was loath under the circumstances to advise the setting up in Naumburg of a bishop of the new faith. To him and to his advisers the step appeared too dangerous. Nevertheless, on hearing of the election of Pflug, he wrote as follows to the Elector: These Naumburg canons "are desperate people and the devil's very own. But what cannot be carried off openly, may be won by waiting. Some day God will let it fall into your Electoral Highness's hands, and the devil's wiseacres will be caught in their own wisdom."[1]

When, however, the Elector obstinately insisted on putting into execution his plan, contrary to justice and to the laws of the Empire as it was, and when his agents had already begun to govern the new territory, Luther's views and those of the Wittenberg theologians gradually changed. It was difficult, they wrote, to "map out beforehand the order" of the German Church; the question whether they would have bishops, or do without, had not yet been decided; meanwhile the Prince had better establish a consistory. Later on, however, they advised the appointment of a bishop, for the Church cannot be without its bishop and the Chapter had forfeited its rights; there was, nevertheless, to be a real and genuine election at which the faithful were to be represented.[2]

Luther and his friends wanted to have as bishop Prince George of Anhalt, Canon of Magdeburg and Merseburg, who shared the Wittenberg views.

To the Elector, however, who had other plans of his own, it seemed, that, owing to his position, this Prince might not prove an easy tool in his sovereign's hands. Nicholas Amsdorf, preacher at Magdeburg, who for long years had been Luther's associate, was accounted one of his most determined supporters and, as time went on, even gained for himself the reputation of being "more Lutheran than Luther," appeared a more likely candidate. It was no difficult matter to secure Luther's consent. He gave Amsdorf the following testimonial: "He was richly

[1] Letter of Jan. 24, 1541, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 253 f.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 553 ff.

endowed by God, learned and proficient in Holy Scripture, more so than the whole crowd of Papists; also a man of good life and faithful and upright at heart." The fact that he was unmarried was a recommendation for the post, even from the point of view of "Papal law."[1]

It has already been mentioned that Amsdorf was later on to write the book "That good works are harmful to Salvation," and that, previously, about 1525, he was active in making matches between the escaped nuns and the leaders of the innovations. Melanchthon, writing to Johannes Ferinarius, says: "He was an adulterer, and lay with the wife of his deacon at Magdeburg"; of this we hear from the Luther researcher J. K. Seidemann, who quotes from a Dresden MS.[2]

The Ceremony at Naumburg

The 20 Jan., 1542, was appointed for the "consecration" of the bishop. Two days before, the Elector of Saxony made his solemn entry into the little town on the Saale escorted by some three hundred horsemen, the gentlemen all clothed in decorous black. His brother Johann Ernest and Duke Ernest of Brunswick were in his train. Luther, Melanchthon and Amsdorf also took part in the procession. It was a mere formality when the Chapter (or rather the magistrates of the towns of Zeitz and Naumburg, and the knights, though only such as were Protestant) were asked to cast their votes in favour of Amsdorf; in reality the will of Johann Frederick was law. Their scruples concerning the oath they had taken under the former bishop, of everlasting fidelity to the Catholic Chapter were, at their desire, dealt with by Luther himself, who argued that no oath taken by the sheep to the wolves could be of any account, and that no duty "could be binding which ran counter to God's commandment to do away with idolatrous doctrine."[3]

The "consecration" then took place on the day appointed, within the venerable walls of the mediæval Cathedral of Naumburg, ostensibly according to the usage of the earliest ages, when the Church had not as yet fallen

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 126, in the "Exempel" (see below, p. 195).

[2] "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 3, p. 302, according to MS. Dresdense B 193, 4.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 554 f.

away from the Gospel. The Blessing and imposition of hands were to signify that the Church of Naumburg, i.e. the whole flock, was wedded to its bishop; he too, in like manner, would ceremonially proclaim his readiness to take charge of this same flock. The bishops of the adjoining sees, who, in accordance with the custom of antiquity should have assembled to perform the consecration, were represented by three superintendents and one apostate Abbot. "At this consecration [to quote Luther's own words] the following bishops, or as we shall call them parsons, shall officiate: Dr. Nicholas Medler, parson and super-attendant of Naumburg, Master George Spalatin, parson and super-attendant at Aldenburg [the former preacher at the Court of the Elector], Master Wolfgang Stein, parson and super-attendant at Weissenfels"[1] (also Abbot Thomas of St. George's near Naumburg).

Luther is silent concerning the two requirements which, according to the olden views, were the most essential for the consecration of a bishop, viz. the ritual consecration, which only a consecrated bishop could impart, and the jurisdiction or authority to rule, only to be derived from bishops yet more highly placed in the hierarchy, or from the Pope. Both these Luther himself had to supply.

At the outset of the ceremony Nicholas Medler announced the deed which was about to be undertaken "through God's Grace," to which the people assented by saying "Amen." After this Luther preached a sermon on the Bible-text addressed to the Church's heads: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). After the sermon Amsdorf knelt before the altar surrounded by the four assistants and the "*Veni Creator*" was sung. Luther admonished the future bishop concerning his episcopal duties, and, on the latter giving a satisfactory answer, in common with the four others, he laid his hands on his head; after this Luther himself offered a prayer for him. The "*Te Deum*" was then sung in German. Hence the bishop's consecration took place in much the same way as the ordination of the preachers, viz. by imposition of hands and prayer.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 125, in the "Exempel."

Luther himself had some misgivings concerning the step and its far-reaching consequences.

He wrote not long after to Jacob Probst, pastor at Bremen, whom he here addresses as bishop: "I wonder you have not heard the news, how, namely, on Jan. 20, Dr. Nicholas Amsdorf was ordained by the heresiarch Luther bishop of the church of Naumburg. It was a daring act and will arouse much hatred, animosity and indignation against us. I am hard at work hammering out a book on the subject. What the result will be God knows." He adds: "Jonas is working successfully for the kingdom of Christ at Halle [where he had been appointed pastor] in spite of the accursed Heinz and Meinz [Duke Henry of Brunswick and Archbishop Albert of Mayence]. My own lordship and Katey my Moses greet you and your spouse. Pray for me that I may die at the right hour, for I am sick of this life, or rather of this unspeakably bitter death."[1]

Luther's booklet on the Consecration of Bishops

The bitter work which Luther, at the request of the Elector and the Naumburg Estates, "hammered out," in vindication of this act of violence, appeared in the same year, i.e. 1542, under the title "Exempel einen rechten Christlichen Bischoff zu weihen."[2]

The title itself shows that the pamphlet was no mere attempt to justify himself and those who had taken part in the act but aims at something more; Luther's apologia becomes a violent attack; a breach was to be made in the wall which so far had hindered Protestants from appropriating the Catholic bishoprics of Germany. "Our intention," says Luther quite plainly, "is to establish an example to show how the bishoprics may be reformed and governed in a Christian manner."[3]

The opening lines show that the book was intended to inflame and excite the masses. The jocular tone blatantly contrasts with the august subject of the episcopate and supplies a good "example" of the author's mode of controversy. The work begins: "Martin Luther, Doctor. We poor heretics have once more committed a great sin against the hellish, unchristian Church of our most fiendish Father the Pope by ordaining and consecrating a bishop for the see of Naumburg without any chrism, without even any butter, lard, fat, grease, incense,

[1] On March 26, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 451: "*Venerabili in Domino viro Iacobo Probst ecclesiæ Bremensis episcopo vero*," etc.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 93 ff. [3] *Ib.*, p. 121.

charcoal or any such-like holy things." Cheerfully indeed did he own, acknowledge and confess this sin against those, who "have shed our blood, murdered, hanged, drowned, beheaded, burnt, robbed and driven us into exile, and inflicted on us every manner of martyrdom, and now, with Meinz and Heinz, have taken to sacking the land."

With a couple of Bible passages he bowls over the legal difficulties arising out of the expulsion of the bishop-elect and the oath of the Estates: "Thou shalt have none other Gods before me"; "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves," etc. We must sweep away the "wolf-bishops whom the devil ordains and thrusts in." "Oath and obedience stand untouched," for they "could take no [valid] oath to the wolf."[1] The further question, "whether it was right to accept consecration or ordination from such damnable heretics [i.e. as he], was disposed of by saying, that the Evangel was no heresy, and that though he understood Holy Scripture but little, yet at any rate he understood it far better—and also knew better how to consecrate a Christian bishop—than the Pope and all his men, who one and all were foes of Holy Writ and of the Word of God."[2]

This screed stands undoubtedly far below many of Luther's other productions. It tends to be diffuse and to harp tediously on the same ideas. Luther had already overwritten himself, and when engaged on it was struggling with bad health, the forerunner of his fatal sickness three years later. His disgust with life spoiled his work.

The "Popes, cardinals, bishops, abbots, canons and parsons" he implores to look rather to the beam in their own eye, to the "simony, favouritism, sharp practices, agreements, conventions and other horrible vices" which prevailed at their own consecrations," than at the mote in the eye of the Lutherans. "You strainers at gnats and swallowers of camels, wipe yourselves first—you know where I mean—before coming and telling us to wipe our noses. It is not fitting that a sow should teach a dove not to eat any unclean grain of corn while itself it loves nothing better than to feed on the excreta which the peasants leave behind the hedge. As for the rest you understand it well enough."[3] "Let us stop our ears and not listen to their shouting, barking, bellowing, their complaints and their abuse," with which I have "put up for many a year from Dr. Sow [Dr. Eck], from Witzel, Tölpel, Schmid, from Dr. Dirtyspoon [Cochlaeus], Tellerlecker, 'Brünzscherben,' Heinz and Meinz and whatever else they may be. . . . The [Last] Day is approaching for which we hope and which they must needs fear, however obstinately they may affect to despise it. Against their defiance we pit ours; at least we may look forward to The Day with a happy, cheerful conscience. On that day we shall be their judges, unless indeed there is really no God in heaven or on earth as the Pope and his followers believe."[4]

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 99, 100, 118, 113. [2] P. 124. [3] P. 125. [4] P. 115.

How little Luther really knew of the cunning policy of his sovereign is plain from his assuring his reader in the same booklet, apparently in the best of faith, that it was no motive of self-interest that had led the Elector to intervene in the Naumburg business ; " the lands were to remain the property of the see," the Elector did not wish " to subjugate it, to deprive it of its liberty, or alienate it from the Empire," etc.[1] He declares that whatever reports Julius Pflug was spreading to the contrary were a " stinking lie." Yet the Elector had ousted the rightful occupant of the see, as he had intended to do all along, and those who ventured to oppose his commands he was to punish by sequestration of lands and even by imprisonment.

The Protestant bishop was assigned a miserable pittance of six hundred Gulden so that Amsdorf, as Luther declared, had been better off at Magdeburg.[2] Practically nothing was done by the sovereign for the ordering of the Church. Luther bewailed to Amsdorf : " The negligence of our government gives me great concern. They so often take rash steps and, then, when we are down in the mire, snore idly and leave us on the lurch. I intend, however, to open the ears of Dr. Pontanus [Chancellor Brück] and of the Prince and give them some plain speaking."[3]

" How is this ? " Luther wrote about this time to Justus Jonas, who, at Halle, had gone through much the same experience, " We pray against the Turk, we are the teachers of the people and their intercessors with God and yet those who wish to be accounted ' Evangelicals ' rashly excite the wrath of God by their avarice, their robbing and plundering of the Church. The people let us go on teaching, praying and suffering while they heap sin upon sin ! "[4]

Excerpts from Luther's Letters to the New " Bishop "

Luther's correspondence with his friend Amsdorf affords an instructive psychological insight into the working of his mind. During those last years of his life he took refuge more and more in a certain fanatical mysticism. He sought comfort in the thought of his exalted calling and in a kind

[1] P. 126 f. [2] Feb. 6, 1542, " Briefe," 5, p. 432.
[3] Letter of Jan. 13, 1543, *ib.*, p. 532.
[4] Letter of July 23, 1542, *ib.*, p. 485.

of inspiration; yet all he could do availed but little against his inward gloom.

Amsdorf, the whilom Catholic priest, found little pleasure in his episcopal status and felt bitterly both his isolation and the contrast between a pomp that was irksome to him and the real emptiness of his position; Luther, accordingly, in the letters of consolation he wrote him, appealed to the Divine inspiration, which had led to his appointment as bishop. The consecration was surely undertaken at the express command of God which no man may oppose. "In these Divine matters," he writes, "it is far safer to allow oneself to be carried away than to take any active part; this is what happened in your case, and yours is a noble and unusual example. We are never in worse case than when we fancy we are acting with discernment and understanding, because then self-complacency slinks in; but the blinder we are, the more God acts through us. He does more than we can think or understand." We have here the same principle to which he had been so fond of appealing in the early days of his career so as to be able to attribute to God the unforeseen and far-going consequences of his deeds, and to reassure himself and urge himself on.

"We must never seek to know," he said to Amsdorf, "what God wills to accomplish through us." "The most foolish thing is the wisest."[1] "God rules the world by means of fools and children, He will finish His work [in you] by our means, just as in the Book of Proverbs (xxx. 2), where we are called the greatest fools on earth."[2]

"It is the counsel of a fool," so Luther said in his "Exempel" of his intentions regarding the bishops' sees, "and I am a fool. But because it is God's counsel, therefore it is at least the counsel of a wise fool."[3]

This pseudo-mystical bent though usual enough in Luther seems to have become very much stronger in him at that time. To this his sad experiences contributed. More than ever convinced, on the one hand, that everything in the world was of the devil and that "Satan and his whole kingdom, full of a terrible wrath, were harassing" the Elector, as he declares in a letter to Amsdorf,[4] he tends, on the other, to fall back with a fanatical enthusiasm on the Evangel "revealed" to him. More than one statement which is no mere empty form, shows that he was really anxious to find consolation in the Divine truths; again and again he strove to rouse himself to a firm confidence. He is also more diligent in his peculiar sort of prayer and strongly urges his friends, notably Amsdorf to whom he frankly imparts his fears and hopes, to seek for help in prayer. His words are really those of one who feels in need of assistance.

[1] To Amsdorf after Jan. 20, 1542, *ib.*, p. 430.
[2] To Amsdorf, Feb. 12, 1542, *ib.*, p. 433.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 123.
[4] Jan. 8, 1546, "Briefe," 5, p. 773.

Amidst the trials of increasing bodily ailments and in other temporal hardships he knows how to encourage his life's partner, Catharine Bora, whose anxiety distressed him: "You want to provide for your God," he says to her in one of his letters, "just as though He were not all-powerful and able to create ten Dr. Martins should your old one get drowned in the Saale, or smothered in the coal-hole or elsewhere. Do not worry me with your cares; I have a better caretaker than even you or all the angels. He lies in the crib and sucks at a Virgin's breast, but nevertheless is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Hence be at peace, Amen."[1] "Do you pray," he admonishes her not long after, "and leave God to provide, for it is written: 'Cast thy care upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee,' Ps. lv."[2]

Such ready words of encouragement do not however prevent him, when dealing with other more stout-hearted friends who were aware of the precarious state of the cause, from giving full voice to the depression, nay despair, which overwhelmed him. The following example from his correspondence with the "bishop" of Naumburg is characteristic.

After an attempt to parry the charge brought against him of being responsible for the public misfortunes which had arisen through the religious revolt, and to reassure Amsdorf, and incidentally himself too, he goes on gloomily to predict the coming chastisement: "Were we the cause of all the evils that have befallen us [and others], how much blood should we have already shed! . . . It is, however, Christ's business to see to this, since He Himself by His Word has called forth so much evil and such great hatred on the part of the devil. All this, so they fancy, is a scandal and a disgrace to our teaching! Nevertheless ingratitude for God's proffered grace is so great, the contempt for the Word goes such lengths, vice, avarice, usury, luxury, hatred, perfidy, envy, pride, godlessness and blasphemy are increasing by such leaps and bounds that it is hard to believe God can much longer deal indulgently and patiently with Germany. Either the Turk will chastise us ["while we brood full of hate over the wounds of our brethren"] or some inner misfortune [civil war] will break over us. It is true we feel the chastisement, we pay the penalty in grief and tears, but yet we remain sunk in terrible sins whereby we grieve the Holy Ghost and rouse the anger of God against us."

What faithful Catholics feared for him owing to his obstinacy, this, in his sad blindness, he now predicts for the foes of his Evangel. "Who can wonder," he cries, "should God, as Holy Scripture says, laugh at our destruction in spite of the weeping and sighing of the guilty. . . . The worst end awaits the impenitent."

"Let none of us expect the least good of the future. Our sins cry aloud to heaven and on earth and there is no hope of any good. Now, in a time of peace, Germany affords the eye a terrible

[1] Feb. 7, 1546, "Briefe," 5, p. 787.
[2] Feb. 10, 1546, *ib.*, p. 790.

spectacle, seeing that God's honour is outraged everywhere by so many wicked men and that the churches and schools are being destroyed. . . . Meanwhile, we at least [the despised preachers of the truth] will bewail our own sins and those of Germany; we will pray and humble our souls, devote ourselves to our office, teaching, exhorting and consoling. What else can we do? Germany has become blind and deaf and rises up in insolence; we cannot hope against hope."

"But do you be brave and give thanks to the Lord for the holy calling He has deigned to bestow upon us; He has willed to sunder us from these reprobates, who are bent on ruining others too, to preserve us clean and blameless in His pure and holy Word, and will continue so to preserve us. Let us, however, weep for the foes of the cross of Christ, even though they mock at our tears. Though we be filled with grief on account of their misery still our grief will be assuaged by the holy joy which will attend the again-rising of the Lord on the day of our salvation, Amen."

He concludes this curious letter, written on Easter Sunday, with the following benediction: "May the Lord be with you to support and comfort you together with us. Outside of Christ, in the kingdom of the raging devil, there is nothing but sadness to be seen or heard." Thus, at the close, he returns to the opening thought suggested by the very object of the letter. Amsdorf had deplored the warlike acts undertaken by Duke Maurice of Saxony against the Elector. Luther, in turn, had informed him, that "here, we are quite certain that what the Duke is doing is the direct work of Satan."[1]

5. Some Further Deeds of Violence. Fate of Ecclesiastical Works of Art

End of the Bishopric of Meissen

The Elector of Saxony, after having been so successful in seizing the bishopric of Naumburg, sought to obtain control of that of Meissen also.

Here, however, there was another Protestant claimant in the field in the person of the young Duke Maurice of Saxony, successor of the late Duke Henry. As for the chartered rights, temporal and spiritual, of the bishop of Meissen they were simply ignored. The Elector, by a breach of the peace, sent a military force on March 22, 1542, to occupy the important town of Wurzen, where there was a collegiate Chapter depending on Meissen. The Chapter was "reformed" by compulsion, the prebendaries who were faithful

[1] April 13, 1542, *ib.*, p. 464.

to the Church being threatened with deposition and corporal penalties, and many sacred objects being flung out of their church. When eventually war threatened to break out between the two branches of the house of Saxony, Landgrave Philip of Hesse stepped in as mediator in the interests of the new Evangel. He twice sent express messengers to summon Luther to intervene. But, even before this, the latter, horrified at the prospect of the "dreadful disgrace" which civil war between two Evangelical princes would bring upon the Evangel, had addressed a long and earnest letter of admonition to both combatants: It was the devil who was seeking to kindle a great fire from such a spark; both sides should have recourse to law instead of falling upon each other over so insignificant a matter, like tipsy yokels fighting in a tap-room over a broken glass; if they refused to do this, he would take the part of the one who first suffered acts of violence at the hands of the other and would free all the latter's followers from their duty and oath of obedience in the war.[1] The writing, which was intended for publication and to be forwarded "to both armies," was only half-printed when the Landgrave intervened. The author withdrew it in order to be able to take up a different attitude in the struggle and to proceed at once to denounce Maurice.

Luther it is true admitted to Brück, the electoral chancellor, that certain people at Wittenberg did not consider the Elector's claims at all well-founded.[2] At the Landgrave's instigation he also addressed a friendly request to the Elector, "not to be too hard and stiff"; of the temporal rights of the case he was ignorant; seeing, however, that there was a dispute the question could not be clear; at any rate Duke Maurice was acting wrongfully in "pressing his rights by so bloodthirsty an undertaking. At times there may be a good reason for pulling one's foot out of the tracks of a mad dog or for burning a couple of tapers at the devil's altar."[3] But on the whole he took the part of his Elector against Maurice, who, even before this, had appeared to him lax and wavering in his support of the new faith. In his history of Maurice of Saxony, G. Voigt gives as his opinion that: "In this matter Luther neither showed himself unbiassed nor did he act uprightly and honourably."[4]

[1] To the Elector and the Duke, April 7, 1542, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 15 ff. "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 304 ff.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 567.
[3] April 9, 1542, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. liii. "Briefe," *ib.*, p. 311.
[4] Leipzig, 1874, p. 28 f.

To Amsdorf, who had helped to fan the flame of mutual hate, Luther speaks of Duke Maurice as "a proud and furious young fellow, in whom we undoubtedly see the direct work of Satan"; it is not he (Luther) or Amsdorf who have to reproach themselves with the conflagration; he is to be quite at rest on this score. Rather, it is Christ Who—by His Word—has given rise to the mischief and to all the hatred of the demons against us. His Word alone is to blame, not we, that so many confessors of our faith have been slain, drowned and burnt. "In vain do they impute to us the bloody deeds which have taken place owing to Münzer, Carlstadt, Zwingli and the [Anabaptist] King of Münster."

"At first Maurice was not regarded by Luther, Melanchthon and most of their contemporaries as of such importance, whether for good or for evil, as he soon after showed himself to be; they fancied him far more dependent on his nobles and councillors than he really was."[1] Luther thought he detected the evil influence of the councillors in the twin businesses of Wurzen and Meissen. In his reply to the Landgrave concerning the attempt to bring the matter to a peaceful issue, without having as yet examined the cause, he speaks of Duke Maurice as a "stupid bloodhound."[2] To his own Court he wrote, on April 12, as though the Duke were without question in the wrong: "May God strengthen, console and preserve my most Gracious Lord and you all in His Grace and in a good conscience, and bring down on the heads of the hypocritical bloodhound of Meissen what Cain and Absalom, Judas and Herodes deserved. Amen and again Amen, to the glory of His name Whom Duke Maurice is outraging to the utmost by this abominable scandal, and singing meanwhile so blasphemous a hymn of praise to the devil and all the foes of God."[3]

In the meantime, owing to Philip's exertions, a compromise was effected between the two parties ready for the fray; by this it was agreed that each should have a free hand in one of the two portions of the diocese, the Elector retaining Wurzen; as for the defenceless bishop of Meissen, who was not even informed of this, he had simply to bow to his fate. Maurice, however, was so greatly angered that he soon after abandoned the League of Schmalkalden and began to make advances to the Emperor.

After the conclusion of peace "the Elector had all the images in the chief church of Wurzen destroyed, except those which were overlaid with gold or which represented 'serious events,' and the rest buried in the vaults." The

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 568.

[2] According to Luther's report to Brück, April 12, 1542, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. liv., "Briefe," p. 314.

[3] *Ib.*

new teaching was then introduced throughout the diocese.[1] Maurice on his part carried off from the cathedral of Meissen, which had fallen to his share, all the gold and silver vessels richly studded with jewels and precious stones and all the treasures of art. He was taking them, he said, under his protection "because the times were so full of risk and danger." After he had taken them into his "care" all trace of them disappeared for all time.

Destruction of Church Property

The fate of the treasures of Meissen Cathedral resembles that which befell the riches of many churches at that time.

We are still in possession of the inventory made by Blasius Kneusel of Meissen which gives us a glimpse of the wealth and magnificence of the treasures of mediæval German art and industry which perished in this way.

The list contains the following entries among others: "One gold cross valued by Duke George at 1300 florins; in it there is a diamond valued at 16,000 florins, besides other precious stones and pearls with which the cross is covered." "A second gold cross, worth 6000 florins. A third is worth 1000 florins, besides the precious stones and pearls of which the cross is full. I value the gold table and the credence table, without the precious stones, at 1000 florins in gold. The large bust of St. Benno weighs 36½ lbs.; it is set with valuable stones; it was made by order of the church and all the congregation contributed towards it. The small cross with the medallions of the Virgin Mary and St. John weighs about 50 lbs."

The number of these treasures of art which fell a prey to the plunderer amounted to fifty-one.[2]

Two years later Luther wrote to Duke Ernest of Saxony to seek help on behalf of two fallen monks then studying theology at Wittenberg: in order to support men who "may eventually prove very useful" "the chalices and monstrances might well be melted down."[3]

The ruthless handling of the Black Monastery at Wittenberg, which had been bestowed on Luther after the dissolution of the Augustinian community, was to set a bad example. The fittings of the church there were scattered and the mediæval images and

[1] Burkhardt, "Gesch. der sächs. Kirchen- u. Schulvisitationen, 1524–1545," 1879, p. 209 f. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), vi., p. 192.

[2] G. A. Arndt, "Archiv der sächs. Gesch.," 2, Leipzig, 1784–1786, p. 333 ff. C. G. Gersdorf, "Urkundenbuch von Meissen," 3, Leipzig, 1867, p. 375 f. Janssen, *ib.*, p. 193.

[3] April 29, 1544, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 91; "Briefe," 5, p. 646.

vestments which, though perhaps only of small material value, would yet be carefully treasured by any museum to-day, were calmly devoted by Luther to destruction.

"Now at last," he says, "I have sold the best of the pictures that still remained, but did not get much for them, fifty florins at the most, and with this I have clothed, fed and provided for the nuns and the monks—the thieves and rascals." He had already remarked that the best of the "church ornaments and vessels" had gone; at the "beginning of the Evangel everything had been laid waste" and "even to this very day they do not cease from carrying off . . . each man whatever he can lay hands on."[1]

No one can adequately describe the material damage which the Catholic parsonages and benefices, convents and bishoprics had to suffer on their suppression. A simple list of the spoliations from the hundreds of cases on record, would give us a shocking picture of the temporal consequences involved in the ecclesiastical upheaval. Apart from the injustice of thus robbing the churches and, incidentally, the numberless poor who looked to the Church for help, it was regrettable that there was no other institution ready to take the place of the olden Church, and assume possession of the properties which fell vacant. The Catholic Church was a firmly knit and well-established community, capable of possessing property. The new Churches on the contrary did not constitute an independent and united body; the universal priesthood, the invisibility of the Church of Christ and its utter want of independence were ideas altogether at variance with the legal conception of ownership upon which, in the topsyturvydom of that age of transition it was more than ever necessary to insist.

Hence the secular element had necessarily to assume the guardianship of the property. But of the secular authorities, which was to take control? For these authorities, which all were looking forward expectantly to their share of the church property heaped up by their Catholic ancestors, were not one but many: There was the sovereign with his Court, the civil administration, the towns with their councils, not to speak of other local claimants; to make the confusion worse there were the church patrons, the trustees of monasteries, the founders of institutions, and their heirs, and also those endowed with certain privileges

[1] In Luther's household memoranda, "Briefe," 6, p. 326.

under letters patent. Moreover, the leaders of the religious innovations insisted that the property acquired was to be devoted to the support of the preachers, the schools and the poor. Hence to the above already lengthy list of claimants must be added the preachers, or the consistories representing them, likewise the administrators of the relief funds, the governors of the schools, and the senates of the universities which had to furnish the preachers.

The war-council of the town of Strasburg, in 1538, addressed a letter to Luther concerning their prospects or intention of securing a share of the church property there. On Nov. 20 of that year he replied, peremptorily telling them to do nothing of the sort ; under the conditions then prevailing they must " *de facto* stand still." Yet no less plain was his hint to them to warn Catholic owners " who hold church property but pay no heed to the cure of souls," to amend and to accept the new Evangel ; if they " wished to go," i.e. preferred banishment, so much the better, otherwise they must once for all by some means be " at last brought to see that further persistence in their wantonness " was out of question.[1]

To add to the general chaos in many places the powerful nobles, as Luther frequently laments, without a shadow of a right, set violent hands on the tempting possessions, and, by entering into possession, frustrated all other claims.

The leading theologians of Wittenberg gradually gave up in despair their attempts to interfere, and contented themselves with exhortations to which nobody paid much heed.

They saw how the lion's share fell to the strongest, i.e. to the Elector, and how everywhere the State took the pennies of the devout and the poor, using them for purposes of its own, which often enough had nothing whatever to do with the Church.

Nowhere do we find any evidence to show that the theologians made use of the authority on which on other occasions they laid so much stress, or made any serious attempt to check arbitrary action and to point out the way to a just distribution, or to lay down some clear and general rules in accordance with which the graduated claims of the different competitors might have been settled. They

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 213 (" Briefwechsel," 12, p. 34).

might at least have associated themselves with the lawyers in the Privy Council and formulated some rule whereby the rights of the State, of the towns and of the church patrons could have been protected against the worst attacks of the plunderers. But no check of this sort was imposed by the theologians on the prevailing avarice and greed of gain. It is plain that they despaired of the result, and, possibly, silence may not have been the worst policy. No one can be blind to the huge difficulties which attended interference, but who was after all to blame for these and so many other difficulties which had arisen in public order, and which could be solved only by the use of force ?

When an exceptionally conscientious town-council sent a messenger to Luther in 1544 to ask for advice and instructions how to deal with the property of two monasteries which had been suppressed, the " honourable, prudent and beloved masters and friends " received from him only a short and evasive answer : " We theologians have nothing to do with this . . . such things must be decided by the lawyers . . . our theology teaches us to obey the worldly law, to protect the pious and to punish the wicked."[1]

If, however, the lawyers were to follow the jurisprudence in which they had been trained, then they could but insist upon the property being restored to its rightful owners, who had never ceased to claim it for the Church, and had even appealed to the imperial authority. Luther's reply constituted a formal retreat from the domain of moral questions, questions indeed which had become burning largely through the action of his theologians. It was an admission that their theology was of no avail to solve an eminently practical question of ethics coming well within its purview which was the safeguarding of the moral law, and for which, indeed, this theology was itself responsible. In this, however, as in so many other instances, they sowed the wind, but when the whirlwind came they ran for shelter to their theological cell.[2]

Still, the question of church property caused Luther so much heart-burning in his old age that his death was hastened thereby.

[1] July 7, 1544, " Werke," *ib.*, p. 104 f.

[2] Cp. Luther's attitude at the time when the question of armed resistance to the Emperor was mooted, vol. iii., 56 ff., and his views on the relations of Church and State.

The lamentations wrung from him in 1538, his description of himself as "tormented" and the "unhappiest of all unhappy mortals,"[1] were due in no small measure to the rapacity he had seen in connection with the church lands. The bulwarks he strove to erect against this disorder were constantly being torn down afresh by the unevangelical disposition of the Evangelicals, and yet he refused to admit, even to himself, that he had been the first to open the way to such arbitrary action. As in his own house he had set an example of destruction of church property, so in his turn he met with bitter experiences even in his own dwelling and in the case of his own private concerns. His tenure of the Black Monastery at Wittenberg was uncertain, and, as already stated, hostile lawyers at Court even questioned his right to dispose of his possessions by Will on the ground that his marriage was null in law, whether canon or civil. The Monastery had been given him by the Prince, and Luther and Catherine Bora used it both as their residence and as a boarding-house for lodgers. It had not, however, been given to Luther's family, and from this the difficulty arose. He was most careful to note down in his account books the things that were to be Katey's inalienable property on his death, but, when he was no more, Katey and her children had in their turn to make acquaintance with the poverty and vicissitudes endured by so many churchmen whose means of livelihood had been filched from them.

Luther and the Images

Can the charge be brought against Luther's teaching of being in part responsible for the outbreaks of iconoclastic violence which accompanied the spread of the Reformation in Germany? Did his writings contribute to the destruction of those countless, admirable and often costly creations of art and piety which fell a prey to the blind fury of the zealot, or to greed of gain?

Assuredly he would, had he seen them, have disapproved of many of the acts of vandalism which history tells us were perpetrated against Catholic churches, monasteries

[1] To Amsdorf, Nov. 25, 1538, "Briefe," 5, p. 136 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 38): "*Vides, quantis premor oneribus. . . . Miserrimis miserior, ut qui amplius nihil possum præ defectu virium.*"

and institutions. Generally speaking the ideas of Carlstadt and Zwingli, wherever they gained the upper hand, proved far more destructive to ecclesiastical works of art than Luther's gentler admonitions against the veneration of images. Nevertheless, his exhortations, though more guarded, made their way among both the mighty and the masses, and were productive of much harm.

He himself declared frankly, about the end of 1524, that " by his writings he had done more harm to the images than Carlstadt with all his storming and fanaticism will ever do."[1] In the course of the next year he boasted of having " brought contempt " on the images even before Carlstadt's time. He had repudiated the latter's acts of violence and his ill-judged appeal to the law of Moses ;[2] on the other hand, he had undermined the very foundations of image-worship by his Evangelical doctrines ; this was a better kind of " storming," for in this way those who once had bowed to images now " refused to have any made." As much as the most fanatical of the iconoclasts, he too wished to see the images " torn out of men's hearts, despised and abolished," but he " destroyed them [the images] outwardly and also inwardly,"[3] and so went one better than Carlstadt, who attacked them only from the outside.

He had, so he continues, speaking to the German people, " consented " that the images should be " done away with outwardly so long as this took place without fanaticism and violence, and by the hand of the proper authorities."[4] " We drive them out of men's hearts until the time comes for them to be torn down by the hands of those whose duty it is to do this."[5] Meanwhile, however, it was " every man's duty " to " destroy them by the Evangel," " especially the images of God and other idolatrous ones."[6]

In his Church-sermons he makes his own the complaint, that, though these images which attracted a great " concourse of people " should be " overthrown," the bishops were actually attaching indulgences to them and thus increasing the disorder.[7]

[1] To the Christians at Strasburg, Dec. 15, 1524, " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 395 ; Erl. ed., 53, p. 275 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 83).
[2] See above, vol. ii., p. 370.
[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 67 f. ; Erl. ed., 29, p. 141 f. " Against the heavenly Prophets." [4] *Ib.*, 68=143. [5] *Ib.*, p. 73=148.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 74=149. [7] " Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 334.

In his sermons against Carlstadt at Wittenberg he had said things, and afterwards disseminated them in print, little calculated to impose restraint on the zeal of the multitude: "It were better we had none of these images on account of the tiresome and execrable abuse and unbelief."[1]

The iconoclasts at Wittenberg were anxious, he says, to set about hewing down the images. His reply was: "Not yet! For you will not eradicate the images in this way, indeed you will only establish them more firmly than ever."[2]

Accordingly it was then his own opinion that they should be "abolished" and "overthrown," particularly such images as were held in peculiar veneration; in 1528 he again admitted that this was his object, when once more proposing his own less noisy and more cautious policy as the more effectual; in his sermons on the Ten Commandments printed at this time he declared that the way to "hew down and stamp out the images was to tear and turn men's hearts away from them."[3] Then the "images would tumble down of their own accord and fall into disrepute; for they [the faithful] will say: If it is not a good work to make images, then it is the devil who makes them and the pictures. In future I shall keep my money in my pocket or lay it out to better advantage."[4]—"The iconoclasts rush in and tear down the images outwardly. To this I do not object so much. But then they go on to say that it must be so, and that it is well pleasing to God"; this, however, is false; it is a mistake to say that such a Divine command exists to tear them down.[5]

The grounds on which he opposed the old-time use of images were the following: By erecting them people sought to gain merit in God's sight and to perform good works; they also trusted in images and in the Saints instead of in Christ, Who is our only ground for confidence; finally—a reason alleged by him but seldom—people adored the images and thus became guilty of idolatry. Here it is plain how much his peculiar theology on good works and the worship of the saints contribute to his condemnation of the ancient Catholic practice. In his zeal against the existing

[1] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 26; Erl. ed., 28, p. 225 f.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 29=228.
[3] *Ib.*, 16, p. 440=36, p. 49.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 440 f.=50.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 444=54, Sermon of 1525.

abuses he overlooks the fact, that to invoke before their images the Saints' intercession with Christ was not in the least opposed to belief in Christ as the one mediator. As for the charge of adoring the images to which he resorts exceptionally—more with the object of making an impression and shielding himself—it amounted to an act of injustice against all his forefathers to accuse them of having been so grossly stupid as to confuse the images with the divinity; even he himself had elsewhere sufficiently absolved them of the charge of adoring saints, let alone images.[1]

The real cause of this premature attack on images found in these sermons was the storm called forth by Carlstadt, which Luther hoped to divert and dominate[2] by the attitude he assumed; otherwise it is very likely he would have refrained from assailing the religious feelings of the people in so sensitive a spot for many years to come, or at any rate would not have done so in the manner he chose by way of reply to Carlstadt.

Nor assuredly would he have gone so far had he himself ever vividly realised the profoundly religious and morally stimulating character of the veneration of images, and its sympathetic and consoling side as exemplified at many of the regular places of pilgrimage at that time. Owing to the circumstances of his early years he had never enjoyed the opportunity of tasting the refreshment and the blessings to be found in those sacred resorts visited by thousands of the devout, where those suffering from any ill of soul or body were wont to seek solace from the cares and trials of life. Indeed it was particularly against such images as were the object of special devotion and to which the people "flocked" with a "false confidence" that his anger was directed.

His animosity to image-worship would also appear to have been psychologically bound up with two tendencies of his: first, with the desire to attack the hated Church of the Papists at those very spots where her influence with the people was most apparent; secondly, with his plan to bring everything down to a dead level, which led him on the specious pretext of serving the religion of the spirit to

[1] Cp. Weim. ed., 1, p. 425; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 51 *sq.* (1518, against the strictures of the Bohemians) and Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 34; Erl. ed., 28, p. 310.

[2] See above, vol. ii., p. 97 f.; vol. iii., p. 385.

abolish, or to curtail, the most popular and cheering phenomena of outward worship.

It is a reprehensible thing, he says, even in his sermons against Carlstadt, to have an image set up in the church, because the believer fancies "he is doing God a service thereby and pleasing Him, and has thus performed a good work and gained merit in God's sight, which is sheer idolatry." In their zeal for their damnable good works the princes, bishops and big ones of the earth had "caused many costly images of silver and gold to be set up in the churches and cathedrals." These were not indeed to be pulled down by force since many at least made a good use of them; but it was to be made clear to the people that if "they were not doing any service to God, or pleasing Him thereby," then they would soon "tumble down of their own accord."[1]

It was a mistake, so he declared in 1528 concerning the grounds of his verdict against the images, to "invoke them specially, as though I sought to give great honour or do a great service to God with the images, as has been the case hitherto." The "trust" placed in the images has cost us the loss of our souls; the Christians whom he had instructed were now opposed to this "trust" and to the opinion "that they were thereby doing a special service to God."[2] Amongst them memorial images might be permitted, i.e. such as "simply represent, as in a glass, past events and things" but "are not made into objects of devotion, trust or worship."[3]—It is dreadful to make them a pretext for "idolatry" and to place our trust in anything but God. "Such images ought to be destroyed, just as we have already pulled down many images of the Saints; it were also to be wished," he adds ironically, "that we had more such images of silver, for then we should know how to make a right Christian use of them."[4]—"I will not pay court to such idols; the worship and adoration must cease."[5] Whoever "with his whole heart has learnt to keep" the First Commandment would readily despise "all the idols of silver and gold."[6]—Yet of the "adoration" of the images he had said in a letter of 1522 to Count Ludwig von Stolberg, that the motive of his opposition was not so much fear of adoration, because adoration of the Saints—so he hints—might well occur without any images; what urged him on was, on the contrary, the false confidence and the opinion of the Catholics that "they were thereby doing a good work and a service to God."[7]

We have just quoted Luther's reservation, viz. that he was willing to tolerate the use of images which "simply

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 31 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 229 f.
[2] *Ib.*, 16, p. 440=36, p. 49. Sermons on the Ten Commandments.
[3] *Ib.*, 28, p. 677 f.=36, p. 329 f. Exposition of Deuteronomy.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 716=368. [5] P. 553=206. [6] P. 715=367.
[7] April 25, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 133 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 347).

represent, as in a glass, past events and things." Statements of this sort occur frequently in his writings. They go hand in hand with a radical insistence on inward disdain for image-worship, and a tendency to demand its entire suppression in the churches. It was on these lines that the Elector of Saxony acted when ordering the destruction of the images in the principal church of Wurzen (above, p. 202); images which represented "serious events" and those overlaid with gold were not to be hewn to pieces.

In the book "Against the Heavenly Prophets" Luther, in the same sense, writes: "Images used as a memorial or for a symbol, like the image of the Emperor" on the coins, were not objectionable; even in conversation images were employed by way of illustration; "memorial pictures or those which bear testimony to the faith, such as crucifixes and the images of the Saints," are honest and praiseworthy, but the images venerated at places of pilgrimage are "utterly idolatrous and mere shelters of the devil."[1] And in the "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis" (1528) he says: "Images, bells, mass vestments, church ornaments, altars, lights and such like I leave optional; whoever wishes may discard them, although pictures from Scripture and representations of sacred subjects I consider very useful, though I leave each one free to do as he pleases; for with the iconoclasts I do not hold."[2]

In one passage of his Church-postils he entirely approves the use of the crucifix; we ought to contemplate the cross as the Israelites looked upon the serpent raised on high by Moses; we should "see Christ in such an image and believe in Him."[3] "If it be no sin," he says elsewhere, "to have Christ in my heart, why should it be a sin to have it [His image] before my eyes?"[4]

But Catholics were saying much the same thing in defence of the veneration of images, though to this Luther paid no attention: If it be no sin to have in our hearts the saints who are Christ's own friends or Mary who is His Mother, how then should it be sinful to have their images before our eyes and to honour them?

As years went by Luther became more and more liberal in recommending the use of historical and, in particular, biblical representations. In 1545, when he published his Passional with his little manual of prayers, he said in the preface, alluding to the woodcuts contained in the book: Such pictures ought to be in the hands of Christians, more particularly of children and of the simple, who can "better be moved by pictures and figures"; there was no harm "in painting such stories in rooms and apartments, together with the texts"; he was in favour of the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, pp. 74 f., 82 f.; Erl. ed., 29, pp. 149 f., 159.
[2] *Ib.*, 26, p. 509=30, p. 372.
[3] *Ib.*, 10, 3, p. 114=15², p. 334.
[4] *Ib.*, 18, p. 83=29, p. 159.

" principal stories of the whole Bible " being pictorially shown, though he was opposed to all " abuse of and false confidence in " images.[1]

Such kindlier expressions did not, however, do full justice to the veneration of images as practised throughout the olden Church, nor did they counteract what he had said of the idols of silver and gold, of the uselessness and harmfulness of bestowing money on sacred pictures and religious works of art to be exposed for the devotion of the people. All was drowned in his incitement to " destroy," " break in pieces," " pull down " and " fall upon " the images, first by means of the Evangel, and, then through the action of the authorities. It is plain what fate was in store particularly for those religious works of art which served as symbols of, or to extol, those dogmas and institutions peculiarly odious to him, for instance, the sacrifice of the Mass, around which centred the ornaments of the altar, the fittings of the choir, and, more or less, all the decorations of the church. As for the sacred vessels, often of the most costly character, and all else that pertained to the dispensing of the sacraments, their destruction had already been decreed.

Further details regarding the Fate of the Works of Art and of Art itself

The account already given above of the squandering and destruction of ecclesiastical works of art, in particular of the valuable images of the Saints in the towns of Meissen and Wurzen,[2] may be supplemented by the reports from Erfurt of the damage done there at the coming of the religious innovations ; we must also bear in mind, that the suppression of Catholic worship in this town which looms so large in Luther's life, took place under his particular influence and with the co-operation of preachers receiving their instructions from Wittenberg.

Before the lawless peasants entered the town on April 28, 1525, the Council had already " taken into safe custody " the treasures of the churches and monasteries ; chalices and other vessels of precious metal were on this occasion carried away in " tubs and trogs," and eventually the public funds were enriched with the profit derived from their sale.[3]

[1] *Ib.*, 63, p. 391 f. [2] Cp. above, p. 203. [3] See vol. ii., p. 351 f.

Amongst the objects taken, were: a silver censer in the shape of a small boat, the silver caskets containing the heads of Saints Severus, Vincentia and Innocentia, the silver reliquary with the bones of SS. Eobanus and Adolarius in which they were carried in solemn procession every seven years. This art-treasure which belonged to St. Mary's, was, not long after, melted down by the town-council when pressed for money, "and cast into bars which were taken to the mint at Weimar." The silver pennies minted from them were later on called coffin pennies. Other valuables which the Council had taken in charge were put up for auction secretly, without their owners learning anything of the matter. "The prebendaries were well-justified in urging," writes the Protestant historian who has collected these data, "as against these high-handed proceedings that the Council should first have laid hands on the valuables belonging to the burghers, or at the very least have summoned the rightful owners to be present at the sale of their property, in order that they might make a note of the prices obtained and thus be able to claim compensation later. The Council suffered a moral set-back, while at the same time reaping no appreciable material advantage."[1]

Not only the Council but the peasants too, led by the Lutheran preachers, were greatly to blame for the destruction of art treasures wrought at Erfurt in that same year. When, in order to put an end to the rule over the town of the Elector, Albert of Brandenburg, they stormed the so-called Mainzer Hof at Erfurt, "all the jewels, gold, silver and valuable household stuff were carried off." Shortly after "the peasants, thanks to their sharpness, managed to unearth a pastoral staff in silver, worth 300 florins [in the then currency], which had been concealed in the privy attached to the room of the master cook to save it from the greed of the robbers."[2] At the Mainzer Hof they removed all monumental tablets, pictures and statues as well as the elaborate coats of arms bearing witness to the Archbishop's sovereignty. A stone effigy of St. Martin which stood in front of the Rathaus and the ancient symbols of the sovereignty of Mayence were pulled down and smashed to bits. In place of these they scrawled on the new stone

[1] Th. Eitner, "Erfurt u. die Bauernaufstände im 16. Jahrh.," Halle, 1903, pp. 59, 95. [2] *Ib.*, p. 72.

edifice which had been erected there another coat of arms in chalk and charcoal, having a plough, coulter and hoe in the shield and in the field a horse-shoe. "During all this Adolarius Huttner [with Eberlin of Günzburg, the apostate Franciscan] and other Lutheran preachers were going to and fro amongst them." The whole row of priests' houses standing alongside the torrent was searched and the valuables plundered.[1]

"The people of Erfurt did almost as much damage as the peasants."[2]

As a matter of fact the citizens frequently outdid the agricultural population in this work of destruction. The chronicles of the times relate, that they broke down the walls of the vaults of the two collegiate churches in hopes of finding hidden treasure behind them, and, then, in their disappointment, sacrilegiously tore open the tabernacles, threw the holy oils to the dogs and treated the things in the churches in such a manner as is "heartrending beyond description." The mob destroyed not merely the books and parchments in which their obligations were recorded, but a number of others of importance for literature and learning were also wantonly spoiled.

From another contemporary source we have the following on the destruction of the old writings: "And besides all this on St. Walpurgis Day in the Lauwengasse the peasants and those who were with them tore up more than two waggon-loads of books, and threw them out of the houses into the street. These the burgher folk carried home in large baskets. While gathering up the torn books as best they could, putting them into baskets and binding them with ropes as one does straw, a whirlwind sprang up and lifted the torn books, letters and papers high into the air and over all the houses, so that many of them were afterwards found sticking to the poles in the vineyards."[3]

In very many instances, particularly during the Peasant War, the destruction and scattering of ecclesiastical works of art went much beyond Luther's injunctions. We shall hear him protest, that many were good Evangelicals only so long as there were still chalices, monstrances and monkish

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 74, 84. [2] *Ib.*, p. 75.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 78, 76.

vessels to be had.[1] It was naturally a very difficult task to check the greed of gain and wanton love of destruction once this had broken loose, particularly after the civil authorities had tasted the sweets to be derived from the change of religion, and after the peasants in the intoxication of their newly found freedom of the Gospel, and in their lust for plunder, had begun to lay violent hands on property.

It was in accordance with Luther's express injunctions that the "proper authorities" proceeded to destroy such images as were not a record of history. They went further, however, nor was the zeal confined solely to the authorities.

In Prussia, the land of the Teutonic Order, the crosses and the images of the Saints had been doomed to destruction by the revolution of 1525; the silver treasures of art in the churches were hammered into plate for use at the new Lutheran Duke's dining-table. The Estates of his country, when he had asked them to vote supplies, retorted that he might as well help himself to the treasures of the churches. The result was, so the chronicler of that day relates, "that all the chalices and other ornaments" were removed from the houses of God, barely one chalice being left in each church; some of the country churches were even driven to use pewter chalices. "When they had taken all the silver they fell upon the bells"; they left but one in each village, the rest being carried off to Königsberg and sold to the smelters.[2] At Marienwerder only did the prebendaries, appealing to the King of Poland, make a stand for the retention of their church plate and other property, until they themselves were sent in chains to Preuschmark.[3]

In 1524, during the fair, the images were dragged out of the churches at Riesenburg in Pomerania, shamelessly dishonoured and finally burnt. The bishop-elect, a dignitary whom the Pope had refused to confirm and who was notoriously a "zealous instrument of the Evangel," excused the proceeding. In other towns similar outrages were perpetrated by the iconoclasts.

On the introduction of Lutheranism at Stralsund almost all the churches and monasteries were stormed, the crucifixes and images being broken up in the presence of members of the town-council (1525).[4]

In 1525 the Lutherans at Dantzig took possession of the wealthy church of St. Mary's, which was renowned for the number of its foundations and had 128 clergy attached to it.

[1] See below, p. 230.

[2] Chr. Falk, "Elbingisch-Preuss. Chronik," ed. M. Töppen ("Publik. des Vereins f. die Gesch. der Provinzen Ost- und West-Preussen," Leipzig, 1879), p. 157 f. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), v., p. 112 ff.

[3] v. Baczko, "Gesch. Preussens," 4, p. 173 ff. Janssen, *ib.*

[4] Janssen, *ib.*

A list of the articles confiscated or plundered comprises: ten chalices of gold with precious stones of great value, and as many bejewelled gold patens and ampullae; a ciborium of gold with corals and gems, two gold crosses with gems, an image of the Virgin Mary with four angels in gold, a silver statue of the same, silver statues of the Apostles, four and twenty silver ciboriums, six and forty silver chalices, two dozen of them of silver-gilt, twelve silver and silver-gilt ampullae, eleven ungilt silver ampullae, twenty-three silver vessels, twelve of them being gilt, twelve silver-gilt chalices with lids, twelve silver-gilt crosses with corals and precious stones, two dozen small silver crosses, eight large and ten small silver censers, etc., twelve chasubles in cloth of gold with pearls and gems, twelve of red silk with a gold fringe, besides this eighty-two silk chasubles, twelve cloth-of-gold antependiums with pearls and gems, six costly copes, twelve other silk copes, six and forty albs of gold and silver embroidered flower-pattern, sixty-five other fine albs, eighty-eight costly altar covers, forty-nine gold-embroidered altar cloths, ninety-nine less elaborate altar cloths.[1]

When Bugenhagen had secured the triumph of Lutheranism in the town of Brunswick the altars were thrown down, the pictures and statues removed, the chalices and other church vessels melted down and the costly mass vestments sold to the highest bidder at the Rathaus (1528). Bugenhagen, Luther's closest spiritual colleague, laboured zealously to sweep the churches clean of "every vestige of Popish superstition and idolatry." Only the collegiate churches of St. Blasius and St. Cyriacus, and the monastery of St. Egidius, of which Duke Henry of Brunswick was patron, remained intact.[2]

The wildest outbreak of iconoclasm took place in 1542 in the Duchy of Brunswick, when the Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hesse occupied the country and proceeded to extirpate the Catholic worship still prevalent there. Within a short while over four hundred churches had been plundered, altars, tabernacles, pictures and sculptures being destroyed in countless numbers.[3]

During this so-called "Evangelical War" five thousand burghers and mercenaries of the town of Brunswick, shouting their war-cry: "The Word of God remaineth for ever," set out, on July 21, 1542, against the monastery of Riddaghausen; there they broke down the altars, images and organs, carried off the monstrances, mass vestments and other treasures of the church, plundering generally and perpetrating the worst abominations. The mob also broke in pieces the images and pictures in the monastery of Steterburg and then demolished the building. Nor did the abbey of Gandersheim fare much better. The prebendaries there complained to the Emperor, that all the crucifixes and images of the Saints had been destroyed together with other

[1] L. Redner's "Skizzen aus der KG. Danzigs," Danzig, 1875 ("Marienkirchen").

[2] Janssen, *ib.*, p. 120. [3] Janssen, *ib.*, vol. xi., p. 34 ff.

objects set up for the adornment of the church and churchyard outside.[1]

The Lutheran preacher, K. Reinholdt, looking back two decades later on the devastation wrought in Germany, reminded his hearers that Luther himself had repeatedly preached that, "it would be better that all churches and abbeys in the world were torn down and burnt to ashes, that it would be less sinful, even if done from criminal motives, than that a single soul should be led astray into Popish error and be ruined"; "if they would not accept his teaching, then, so Luther the man of God had exclaimed, he would wish not merely that his doctrine might be the cause of the destruction of Popish churches and convents, but that they were already lying in a heap of ashes."[2]

At Hamburg iconoclastic disturbances began in Dec., 1528. The Cistercian convent, Harvestehude, where the clergy still dare to say Mass, was rased to the ground.[3]

At Zerbst, in 1524, images and church fittings were destroyed, part of these being used to "keep up the fire for the brewing of the beer";[4] stone sculptures were mutilated and then used in the construction of the Zerbst Town-Hall, whence they were brought to light at a much later date, when a portion of the building was demolished. The statues, headless, indeed, but still gleaming with gold and colours, gave, as a narrator of the find said, "an insight into the horrors of the iconoclasm which had run riot in the neighbouring churches."[5]

The chronicler Oldecop describes how, at Hildesheim in 1548, the heads of the stone statues of St. Peter and St. Paul which stood at the door of the church of the Holy Rood were hewn off and replaced by the heads of two corpses from the mortuary; they were then stoned by the boys. The magistrates, indeed, fined the chief offender, but only because forced to do so.[6] Hildesheim had been protestantised in great part as early as 1524. At that time the mob plundered the churches and monasteries, rifled the coffins of the dead in search of treasure, destroyed the crucifixes and the images of the Saints, tore down the side altars in most of the churches and carried off chalices, monstrances and ornaments, and even the silver casket containing the bones of St. Bernward.[7] From St. Martin's, a church belonging to the Franciscans, the magistrates, according to the inventory, removed the following: sixteen gilt chalices and patens, eleven silver chalices, one large monstrance with bells,

[1] *Ib.*, vol. vi., p. 205.

[2] Whitsuntide Sermon, in Janssen, *ib.*, vol. xi., p. 38. Cp. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, pp. 121, 131, 222 f., 330. Cp. Janssen, *ib.*, p. 37, the passages from the sermons of the superintendent George Nigrinus.

[3] Janssen, *ib.*, v., p. 121.

[4] Beckmann, "Historie des Fürstentums Anhalt," 6, p. 43.

[5] "Repertorium f. Kunstwissenschaft," 20, p. 46. Janssen, *ib.*, vol. xi., p. 36.

[6] Oldecop, in 1548. Janssen, *ib.*, vol. xi., p. 36.

[7] "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 9, p. 316 ff.; 10, p. 15 ff. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), vi., p. 209.

one large gilt cross, three silver crosses with stands, a silver statue of Our Lady four feet in height, a silver censer, two silver ampullae, a silver-gilt St. Lawrence gridiron, a big Pacifical from the best cope, all the bangles from the chasubles, seventeen silver clasps from the copes, "the jewellery belonging to our dear ladies the Virgin Catherine and Mother Anne," and, besides, ten altars and also a monument erected to Brother Conrad, who was revered as a Saint, were destroyed; the copper and lead from the tower was carried off together with a small bell.[1]

When the Schmalkalden Leaguers began to take up arms for the Evangel the Evangelical captain Schärtlin von Burtenbach, commander-in-chief of the South-German towns, suddenly fell upon the town of Füssen on July 9, 1546, abolished the Catholic worship and threw the "idols" out of the churches. Before his departure he plundered all the churches and clergy, and "set the peasants on to massacre the idols in their churches"; the proceeds "from the chalices and silver plate he devoted to the common expenses of the Estates."

This was only the beginning of Schärtlin's plundering. After joining hands with the Würtemberg troops his raiding expeditions were carried on on a still larger scale.[2]

During the Schmalkalden campaign the soldiers of Saxony and Hesse on their retreat from the Oberland, acting at the behest of the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, carried off as booty all the valuable plate belonging to the churches and monasteries. Chalices, monstrances, Mass vestments and costly images, none of them were spared. In Saxony similar outrages were perpetrated.

In Jan., 1547, the Elector caused all the chalices, monstrances, episcopal crosses and other valuables that still remained at Halle and either were the property of the Archbishop of Magdeburg, Johann Albert, or had been presented to the place by him, to be brought to Eisleben and either sold or coined. The Elector's men-at-arms and the mob destroyed the pictures and statues in the Dominican and Franciscan friaries. When, shortly after this, Merseburg, as well as Magdeburg and Halberstadt, was occupied by the Saxon troops, the leaders robbed the Cathedral church (of Merseburg) of its oldest and most valuable art treasures, amongst which was the golden table which the Emperor Henry II had presented to it.[3]

Magdeburg was the rallying-place of Lutheran zealots, such as Flacius Illyricus, and was even called the "chancery of God and His Christ," by Aquila in a letter to Duke Albert of Prussia;[4] before it was besieged in the Emperor's name by Maurice of Saxony and was yet under the rule of a Council banned by the

[1] "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 10, p. 17.

[2] Ladurner, "Der Einfall der Schmalkaldener im Tirol, 1546," ("Archiv f. Gesch. u. Altertumskunde Tirols," 1), p. 415 ff. Janssen, *ib.*, vi., 315 ff.

[3] Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 349.

[4] J. Voigt, "Briefwechsel der Gelehrten des Zeitalters der Reformation mit Herzog Albrecht von Preussen," 1841, p. 30.

Empire, it passed through a period of wild outrage directed against the Catholic churches and convents, both within and outside the walls. The appeal addressed by the cathedral Chapter on Aug. 15, 1550, to the Estates of the Empire assembled at Augsburg gives the details.[1] The town, "for the protection of the true Christian religion and holy Evangel," laid violent hands on the rich property of the churches and cloisters, and committed execrable atrocities against defenceless clerics. Bodies were exhumed in the churches and cemeteries. Never, so the account declares, would the Turks have acted with such barbarity. Even the tomb of the Emperor Otto, the founder of the archdiocese, was, so the Canons relate, "inhumanly and wantonly broken open and desecrated with great uproar."

Several thousand men set out from the town for the monastery of Hamersleben, situated in the diocese of Halberstadt. They forced their way into the church one Sunday during Divine service, wounded or slaughtered the officiating priests, trampled under foot the Sacred Host and ransacked church and monastery. Among the images and works of art destroyed was some magnificent stained glass depicting the Way of the Cross. No less than 150 waggons bore away the plunder to Magdeburg, accompanied by the mob, who in mockery had decked themselves out in the Mass vestments and habits of the monks.[2]

Hans, Margrave of Brandenburg-Küstrin, was one who had war against the Catholic clergy much at heart. In a letter to the Elector Maurice he spoke of the clergy as "priests of Baal and children of the devil." It was a proof of his Evangelical zeal, that, on July 15, 1551, he ordered the church of St. Mary at Görlitz to be pillaged and destroyed by Johann von Minckwitz. All the altars, images and carvings were hacked to pieces, all the costly treasures stolen. Minckwitz had great difficulty in rescuing the treasures from the hands of a drunken mob of peasants who were helping in the work, and conveying them safely to the Margrave at Küstrin.[3]

In the spring of 1552, when Maurice of Saxony levied a heavy fine on the town of Nuremberg for having revolted against the Emperor, the magistrates sought to indemnify themselves by taking nearly 900 lbs. weight of gold and silver treasures out of the churches of Our Lady, St. Lawrence and St. Sebaldus and ordering them to be melted down or sold.[4]

In June and July, 1552, Margrave Albert of Brandenburg-Kulmbach laid waste the country around Mayence with fire and sword to such an extent, that the bishop of Würzburg, in order to raise the unheard-of sums demanded, had, as we find it stated in a letter of Zasius to King Ferdinand dated July 10, to lump together "all the gold and silver plate in the churches, the jewels, reliquaries, monstrances, statues and vessels of the

[1] Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 434.

[2] Aug. 19, 1548, C. W. Hase, "Mittelalterliche Baudenkmale Niedersachsens," Hannover, 1858, Hft., 3, p. 100.

[3] Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 438 f.

[4] *Ib.*, vi., p. 454.

sanctuary" and have them minted into thalers. "At Neumünster one reliquary was melted down which alone was worth 1000 florins."[1] The citizens of Würzburg were obliged to give up all their household plate and the cathedral itself the silver statue of St. Kilian, patron of the diocese.[2]

When the commanders and the troops of the Elector Maurice withdrew from the Tyrol after the frustration of their undertaking owing to the flight of the Emperor to Carinthia, all the sacred objects of value in the Cistercian monastery of Stams in the valley of the upper Inn were either broken to pieces or carried off. The soldiers broke open the vault, where the earthly remains of the ruling Princes had rested for centuries, dragged the corpses out of their coffins and stripped them of their valuables.[3] The inventory of the treasures of art made of precious metal and other substances which perished at Stams must be classed with numerous other sad records of a similar nature dating from that time.[4]

After the truce of Passau, Margrave Albert of Brandenburg, with the help of France, turned his attention to Frankfurt, Mayence and Treves. At Mayence, after making a vain demand for 100,000 gold florins from the clergy, he gave orders to ransack the churches, and set on fire the churches of St. Alban, St. Victor and Holy Cross, the Charterhouse and the houses of the Canons. He boasted of this as a "right princely firebrand we threw into the damned nest of parsons." In Treves all the collegiate churches and monasteries were "sacked down to the very last farthing," as an account relates; the monastery of St. Maximin, the priory of St. Paul, the castle of Saarburg on the Saar, Pfalzel and Echternach were given to the flames.[5] "Such proceedings were incumbent on an honourable Prince who had the glory of God at heart and was zealous for the spread of the Divine Gospel, which God the Lord in our age has allowed to shine forth with such marvellous light." So Albert boasted to an envoy of the Archbishop of Mayence on June 27, 1552, when laying waste Würzburg.[6]

"The archbishoprics of Treves and Mayence, the bishoprics of Spires, Worms and Eichstätt are laid waste with pillage," wrote Melchior von Ossa the Saxon lawyer, "the stately edifices at Mayence, Treves and other places, where lay the bones of so many pious martyrs of old, are reduced to ashes."[7] The complaints of a Protestant preacher who had worked for a considerable time at Schwäbisch-Hall ring much the same: "Our parents were willing to contribute towards the building of

[1] See A. v. Druffel, "Briefe und Akten zur Gesch. des 16. Jahrh.," 2, 1873 ff., p. 668. [2] Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 458.

[3] F. A. Sinnacher, "Beitr. z. Gesch. d. Kirche Säben und Brixen," 7, 1830, p. 441. D. Schönherr, "Der Einfall des Kurfürsten Moritz in Tyrol," 1868, p. 101 ff. Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 478.

[4] See Schönherr, *ib.*, p. 137 ff.

[5] Janssen, *ib.*, vi., p. 496. [6] *Ib.*, vi., p. 459.

[7] Melchior von Ossa in his diary, Jan. 1, 1553. F. A. Langenn, "D. Melchior von Ossa," 1858, p. 161. Janssen, *ib.*, p. 505.

churches and to the adornment of the temples of God. . . . But now the churches have been pilfered so badly that they barely retain a roof over them. Superb Mass vestments of silk and velvet with pearls and corals were provided for the churches by our forefathers; these have now been removed and serve the woman-folk as hoods and bodices; indeed so poor have some of the churches become under the rule of the Evangel, that it is impossible to provide the ministers of the Church even with a beggarly surplice."[1]

The wanton waste and destruction which took place in the domain of art under Lutheran rule during the first fifty years of the religious innovations, great as they were, do not by any means approach in magnitude the losses caused elsewhere by Zwinglianism and Calvinism.

Yet two things in Lutheranism had a disastrous effect in checking the revival of religious art, even when the first struggles for mastery were over: first, there was the animosity against the Sacrifice of the Mass and the perpetual eucharistic presence of Christ in the tabernacle; this led people to view with distrust the old alliance existing between the Eucharistic worship and the liberal arts for exalting the dignity and beauty of the churches. After the Mass had been abolished and the Sacrament had ceased to be reserved within the sacred walls, respect for and interest in the house of God, which had led to so much being lavished on it, began to wane. The other obstacle lay in Luther's negative attitude towards the ancient doctrine and practice of good works. The belief in the meritoriousness of works had in the past been a stimulus to pecuniary sacrifices and offerings for the making of pious works of art. Now, however, artists began to complain, that, owing to the decline of zeal for church matters their orders were beginning to fall off, and that the makers of works of art were being condemned to starvation.

In a protocol of the Council of Strasburg, dated Feb. 3, 1525, we read in a petition from the artists: "Painters and sculptors beg, that, whereas, through the Word of God their handicraft has died out they may be provided with posts before other claimants." The Council answered that their appeal would "be borne in mind."[2]

[1] Döllinger, "Reformation," 2, p. 318.

[2] "Mitteil. der Gesellschaft f. Erhaltung der geschtl. Denkmäler im Elsass," 15, 1892, p. 248. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), xi., p. 46.

The verses of Hans Sachs of Nuremberg are well-known :

"Bell-founders and organists,
Gold-beaters and illuminists,
Hand-painters, carvers and goldsmiths,
Glass-painters, silk-workers, coppersmiths,
Stone-masons, carpenters and joiners,
'Gainst all these did Luther wield a sword.
From Thee we ask a verdict, Lord."

In the poet's industrious and artistic native town the decline must have been particularly noticeable. According to the popular Lutheran poet of Nuremberg the fault is with the complainants themselves, who,

"With scorn disdain
From greed of gain"

the Word of Christ. "They must cease worrying about worldly goods like the heathen, but must seek the Kingdom of God with eagerness."[1]

It is perfectly true that the words that Hans Sachs on this occasion places in the mouth of the complainant are unfair to Luther :

"All church building and adorning he despises,
Treats with scorning,
He not wise is."[2]

For in spite of his attacks on the veneration of images, on the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and the meritoriousness of pious foundations, Luther was, nevertheless, not so "unwise" as to despise the "building and adorning" of the churches, where, after all, the congregation must assemble for preaching, communion and prayer.[3]

That Luther was not devoid of a sense of the beautiful and of its practical value in the service of religion is proved by his outspoken love of music, particularly of church-music, his numerous poetic efforts, no less than by that strongly developed appreciation of well-turned periods, clearness and force of diction so well seen in his translation of the Bible. His life's struggle, however, led him along paths which make

[1] E. Weller, "Der Volksdichter Hans Sachs u. seine Dichtungen," 1868, p. 118 ff. [2] *Ib.*

[3] He frequently laments that the churches were too ill-provided for. Cp. Walch's Index, s.v. "Kirche," & "Gotteshäuser."

it easy to understand how it is that he has so little to say in his writings in commendation of the other liberal arts. It also explains the baldness of his reminiscences of his visit to Italy and the city of Rome ; the young monk, immersed in his theology, was even then pursuing quite other interests than those of art. It is true Luther, once, in one of the rare passages in favour of ecclesiastical art, speaking from his own point of view, says : " It is better to paint on the wall how God created the world, how Noah made the ark and such-like pious tales, than to paint worldly and shameless subjects ; would to God I could persuade the gentry and the rich to have the whole Bible story painted on their houses, inside and out, for everyone's eye to see ; that would be a good Christian work."[1] Manifestly he did not intend his words to be taken too literally in the case of dwelling-houses. A fighter such as Luther was scarcely the right man to give any real stimulus in the domain of art. The heat of his religious polemics scorched up in his soul any good dispositions of this sort which may once have existed, and blighted in its very beginnings the growth of any real feeling for art among his zealous followers. Hardly a single passage can be found in which he expresses any sense of satisfaction in the products of the artist.

It is generally admitted that in the 16th century German art suffered a severe set-back. For this the bitter controversies which for the while transformed Germany into a hideous battlefield were largely responsible ; for such a soil could not but prove unfavourable for the arts and crafts. The very artists themselves were compelled to prostitute their talents in ignoble warfare. We need only call to mind the work of the two painters Cranach, the Elder and the Younger, and the horrid flood of caricatures and base vilifications cast both in poetry and in prose. " The rock on which art suffered shipwreck was not, as a recent art-writer says, the fact that ' German art was too early severed from its bond with the Church,' but that, with regard to its subject-matter and its methods of expression, it was forced into false service by the intellectual and religious leaders."[2]

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 82 f. ; Erl. ed., 29, p. 158.

[2] See P. Lehfeldt, " Luthers Verhältnis zu Kunst und Künstlern," Berlin, 1892, p. 84. Janssen, *ib.*, xi., 39.—On the whole subject see Janssen, " Hist. of the German People " (Engl. Trans.), vol. xi., ch. ii.

CHAPTER XXXI

LUTHER IN HIS DISMAL MOODS, HIS SUPERSTITION AND DELUSIONS

1. His Persistent Depression in Later Years Persecution Mania and Morbid Fancies

Among the various causes of the profound ill-humour and despondency, which more and more overshadowed Luther's soul during the last ten years of his life, the principal without a doubt was his bitter disappointment.

He was disappointed with what he himself calls the "pitiable spectacle" presented by his Church no less than with the firmness and stability of the Papacy. Not only did the Papal Antichrist refuse to bow to the new Evangel or to be overthrown "by the mere breath of Christ's mouth," as Luther had confidently proclaimed would be the case, but, in the evening of his days, it was actually growing in strength, its members standing shoulder to shoulder ready at last to seek inward reform by means of a General Council.

The melancholy to which he had been subject in earlier years had been due to other thoughts which not seldom pressed upon him, to his uncertainty and fear of having to answer before the Judge. In his old age such fears diminished, and the voices which had formerly disquieted him scarcely ever reached the threshold of his consciousness; by dint of persistent effort he had hardened himself against such "temptations." The idea of his Divine call was ever in his mind, though, alas, it proved only too often a blind guide incapable of transforming his sense of discouragement into any confidence worthy of the name. At times this idea flickers up more brightly than usual; when this happens his weariness seems entirely to disappear and makes room for the frightful outbursts of bitterness, hate and anger of a soul at odds both with itself and with the whole world.

Doubtless his state of health had a good deal to do with

this, for, in his feverish activity, he had become unmindful of certain precautions. Lost in his exhausting literary labours and public controversies his state of nervous excitement became at last unbearable.

The depression which is laying its hand on him manifests itself in the hopeless, pessimistic tone of his complaints to his friends, in his conviction of being persecuted by all, in his superstitious interpretations of the Bible and the signs of the times, in his expectation of the near end of all, and in his firm persuasion that the devil bestrides and rules the world.

His Depression and Pessimism

Disgust with work and even with life itself, and an appalling unconcern in the whole course of public affairs, are expressed in some of his letters to his friends.

"I am old and worked out—'old, cold and out of shape,' as they say—and yet cannot find any rest, so greatly am I tormented every day with all manner of business and scribbling. I now know rather more of the portents of the end of this world; that it is indeed on its last legs is quite certain, with Satan raging so furiously and the world becoming so utterly beastly. My only remaining consolation is that the end cannot be far off. Now at last fewer false doctrines will spring up, the world being weary and sick of the Word of God; for if they take to living like Epicureans and to despising the Word, who will then have any hankering after heresies? . . . Let us pray 'Thy will be done,' and leave everything to take its course, to fall or stand or perish; let things go their own way if otherwise they will not go." "Germany," he says, "has had its day and will never again be what it once was"; divided against itself it must, so he fancies, succumb to the devil's army embodied in the Turks. This to Jakob Probst, the Bremen preacher.[1] Not long after he wrote to the same: "Germany is full of scorners of the Word. . . . Our sins weigh heavily upon us as you know, but it is useless for us to grumble. Let things take their course, seeing they are going thus."[2]

To Amsdorf he says in a letter that he would gladly die. "The world is a dreadful Sodom." "And, moreover, it will grow still worse." "Could I but pass away with such a faith, such peace, such a falling asleep in the Lord as my daughter [who had just died]!"[3] Similarly, in another letter to Amsdorf we read: "Before the flood the world was as Germany now is before her downfall. Since they refuse to listen they must be taught by experience. It will cry out with Jeremias [li. 9]: 'We would

[1] March 26, 1542, "Briefe," 5, p. 451.
[2] Oct. 9, 1542, *ib.*, p. 501. [3] Oct. 29, 1542, *ib.*, p. 502.

have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her.' God is indeed our salvation, and to all eternity will He shield us."[1]

"We will rejoice in our tribulation," so he encourages his former guest Cordatus, "and leave things to go their way; it is enough that we, and you too, should cause the sun of our teaching to rise all cloudless over the wicked world, after the example of God our Father, Who makes His sun to shine on the just and the unjust. The sun of our doctrine is His; what wonder then if people hate us." "Thus we can see," so he concludes, that "outwardly we live in the kingdom of the devil."[2]

Plunged in such melancholy he is determined, without trusting in human help, so he writes to his friend Jonas, "to leave the guidance of all things to Christ alone"; of all active work he was too weary; everything was "full of deception and hypocrisy, particularly amongst the powerful"; to sigh and pray was the best thing to do; "let us put out of our heads any thought and plans for helping matters, for all is alike useless and deceitful, as experience shows."[3]

Christ had taken on Himself the quieting of consciences, hence, with all the more confidence, "might they entrust to Him the outcome of the struggle between the true Church and the powers of Satan." "True, Christ seems at times," he writes to his friend Johann August, "to be weaker than Satan; but His strength will be made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9), His wisdom is exalted in our foolishness, His goodness is glorified in our sins and misdeeds in accordance with His wonderful and inscrutable ways. May He strengthen you and us, and conform us to His likeness for the honour of His mercy."[4]

During such a period of depression his fears are redoubled when he hears of the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks at Stuhlweissenburg; the following is his interpretation of the event: "Satan has noticed the approach of the Judgment Day and shows his fear. What may be his designs on us? He rages because his time is now short. May God help us manfully to laugh at all his fury!" He laments with grim irony the greed for gain and the treachery of the great. "Devour everything in the devil's name," he cries to them, "Hell will glut you," and continues: "Come,

[1] Nov. 7, 1543, *ib.*, p. 600. [2] Dec. 3, 1544, *ib.*, p. 702.
[3] March 13, 1542, *ib.*, p. 444. [4] Oct. 5, 1542, *ib.*, p. 501.

Lord Jesus, come, hearken to the sighing of Thy Church, hasten Thy coming; wickedness is reaching its utmost limit; soon it must come to a head, Amen."

Even this did not suffice and Luther again adds: "I have written the above because it seems better than nothing. Farewell, and teach the Church to pray for the Day of the Lord; for there is no hope of a better time coming. God will listen only when we implore the quick advent of our redemption, in which all the portents agree."[1]

The outpourings of bitterness and disgust with life, which Antony Lauterbach noted while a guest at Luther's table in 1538, find a still stronger echo in the Table-Talk collected by Mathesius in the years subsequent to 1540.

In Lauterbach's Notes he still speaks of his inner struggles with the devil, i.e. with his conscience; this was no longer the case when Mathesius knew him: "We are plagued and troubled by the devil, whose bones are very tough until we learn to crack them. Paul and Christ had enough to do with the devil. I, too, have my daily combats."[2] He had learnt how hard it was "when mental temptations come upon us and we say, 'Accursed be the day I was born'"; rather would he endure the worst bodily pains during which at least one could still say, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."[3] The passages in question will be quoted at greater length below.

But according to Lauterbach's Notes of his sayings he was also very bitter about the general state of things: "It is the world's way to think of nothing but of money," he says, for instance, "as though on it hung soul and body. God and our neighbour are despised and people serve Mammon. Only look at our times; see how full all the great ones, the burghers too, and the peasants, are with avarice and how they stamp upon religion. . . . Horrible times will come, worse even than befell Sodom and Gomorrha!"[4]—"All sins," he complains, "rage mightily, as we see to-day, because the world of a sudden has grown so wanton and calls down God's wrath upon its head." In these words he was bewailing, as Lauterbach relates, the "impending misfortunes of Germany."[5]—"The Church to-day is more tattered than any beggar's cloak."[6] "The world is made up of nothing but contempt, blasphemy, disobedience, adultery, pride and thieving; it is now in prime condition for the slaughter-house. And Satan gives us no rest, what with Turk, Pope and fanatics."[7]

"Who would have started preaching," he says in the same year, oppressed by such experiences, "had he known beforehand

[1] Dec. 16, 1543, *ib.*, p. 611 f.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 144.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 105. [4] *Ib.*, p. 140. [5] *Ib.*, p. 122.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 113. [7] *Ib.*, p. 132.

that such misfortune, fanatism, scandal, blasphemy, ingratitude and wickedness would be the sequel ? "[1] To live any longer he had not the slightest wish now that no peace was to be hoped for from the fanatics.[2] He even wished his wife and children to follow him to the grave without delay because of the evil times to come soon after.[3]

In the conversations taken down by Mathesius in the 'forties Luther's weariness of life finds even stronger expression, nor are the words in which he describes it of the choicest : " I have had enough of the world and it, too, has had enough of me ; with this I am well content. It fancies that, were it only rid of me, all would be well. . . ." As I have often repeated : " I am the ripe shard and the world is the gaping anus, hence the parting will be a happy one."[4] " As I have often repeated " ; the repulsive comparison had indeed become a favourite one with him in his exasperation. Other sayings in the Table-Talk contain unmistakable allusions to the bodily excretions as a term of comparison to Luther's so ardently desired departure from this world.[5] The same coarse simile is met in his letters dating from this time.[6]

The reason of his readiness to depart, viz. the world's hatred for his person, he elsewhere depicts as follows ; the politicians who were against him, particularly those at the Dresden court, are " Swine," deserving of " hell-fire " ; let them at least leave in peace our Master, the Son of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven also ; with a quiet conscience we look upon them as abandoned bondsmen of the devil, whose oaths though sworn to a hundred times over are not the least worthy of belief ; " we must scorn the devil in these devils and sons of devils, yea, in this seed of the serpent."[7]

" The gruff, boorish Saxon,"[8] as Luther calls himself, here comes to the fore. He seeks, however, to refrain from dwelling unduly on the growing lack of appreciation shown for his authority ; he was even ready, so he said, " gladly to nail to the Cross those blasphemers and Satan with them."[9]

" I thank Thee, my good God," he once said in the winter 1542–43 to Mathesius and the other people at table, " for letting me be one of the little flock that suffers persecution for Thy Word's sake ; for they do not persecute me for adultery or usury, as I well know."[10] According to the testimony of Mathesius he also said : " The Courts are full of Eceboli and folk who change with the weather. If only a real sovereign like Constantine came to

[1] Below, xxxii., 6.
[2] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 114, in 1538. [3] *Ib.*, p. 105.
[4] Mathesius, " Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 303.
[5] According to Mathesius (" Historien," p. 146) he once said even in the pulpit : " A full belly and ripe dung are easily parted."
[6] To Anton Lauterbach, Nov. 3, 1543, " Briefe," 5, p. 598. [7] *Ib.*
[8] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 156 ; " Aufzeichn.," p. 117.
[9] To Lauterbach, *ib.* [10] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 303.

his Court [the Elector's] we should soon see who would kiss the Pope's feet." "Many remain good Evangelicals because there are still chalices, monstrances and cloistral lands to be taken."[1] That a large number, not only of the high officials, but even of the "gentry and yokels," were "tired" of him is clear from statements made by him as early as 1530. Wishing then to visit his father who lay sick, he was dissuaded by his friends from undertaking the journey on account of the hostility of the country people towards his person: "I am compelled to believe," so he wrote to the sick man, "that I ought not to tempt God by venturing into danger, for you know how both gentry and yokels feel towards me."[2] "Amongst the charges that helped to lessen his popularity was his supposed complicity in the Peasant War and in the rise of the Sacramentarians."[3]

"Would that I and all my children were dead," so he repeats, according to Mathesius,[4] "*Satur sum huius vitae*"; it was well for the young, that, in their thoughtlessness and inexperience, they failed to see the mischief of all the scandals rampant, for else "they would not be able to go on living."[5]—"The world cannot last much longer. Amongst us there is the utmost ingratitude and contempt for the Word, whilst amongst the Papists there is nothing but blood and blasphemy. This will soon knock the bottom out of the cask."[6] There would be no lack of other passages to the same effect to quote from Mathesius.

Some of the Grounds for His Lowness of Spirits

Luther is so communicative that it is easy enough to fix on the various reasons for his depression, which indeed he himself assigns.

To Melanchthon Luther wrote: "The enmity of Satan is too Satanic for him not to be plotting something for our undoing. He feels that we are attacking him in a vital spot with the eternal truth."[7] Here it is his gloomy forebodings concerning the outcome of the religious negotiations, particularly those of Worms, which lead him so to write. The course of public events threw fresh fuel on the flame of his anger. "I have given up all hope in this colloquy. . . . Our theological gainstanders," so he says, "are possessed of Satan, however much they may disguise themselves in majesty and as angels of light."[8]—Then there was the terrifying onward march of the Turks: "O raging fury, full of all manner

[1] "Hist.," p. 145′ f. Ecebolius, under the Emperor Constantine, a type of the hypocrite.
[2] To Hans Luther, Feb. 15, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 24, p. 130 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 230).
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 127.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 288.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 179.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 155.
[7] Dec. 7, 1540, "Briefe," 5, p. 322.
[8] *Ib.*

of devils." Such is his excitement that he suspects the Christian hosts of "the most fatal and terrible treachery."[1]

The devil, however, also lies in wait even for his friends to estrange them from him by delusions and distresses of conscience; this knowledge wrings from him the admonition: "Away with the sadness of the devil, to whom Christ sends His curse, who seeks to make out Christ as the judge, whereas He is rather the consoler."[2] Satan just then was bent on worrying him through the agency of the Swiss Zwinglians: "I have already condemned and now condemn anew these fanatics and puffed-up idlers." Now they refuse to admit my victories against the Pope, and actually claim that it was all their doing. "Thus does one man toil only for another to reap the harvest."[3] These satellites of Satan who work against him and against all Christendom are hell's own resource for embittering his old age.

Then again the dreadful state of morals, particularly at Wittenberg, under his very eyes, makes his anger burst forth again and again; even in his letter of congratulation to Justus Jonas on the latter's second marriage he finds opportunity to have a dig at the easy-going Wittenberg magistrates: "There might be ten trulls here infecting no end of students with the French disease and yet no one would lift a finger; when half the town commits adultery, no one sits in judgment. . . . The world is indeed a vexatious thing." The civic authorities, according to him, were but a "plaything in the devil's hand."

At other times his ill-humour vents itself on the Jews, the lawyers, or those German Protestant Reformers who had the audacity to hold opinions at variance with his. Carlstadt, with his "monstrous assertions"[4] against Luther, still poisons the air even when Luther has the consolation of knowing, that, on Carlstadt's death (in 1541), he had been fetched away by the "devil." Carlstadt's horrid doctrines tread Christ under foot, just as Schwenckfeld's fanaticism is the unmaking of the Churches.

Then again there are demagogues within the fold who say: "I am your Pope, what care I for Dr. Martin?" These, according to him, are in almost as bad case as the others. Thus, "during our lifetime, this is the way the world rewards us, for and on this account and behalf! And yet we are expected to pray and heed lest the Turk slay such Christians as these who really are worse than the Turks themselves! As though it would not be better, if the yoke of the Turk must indeed come upon us, to serve the Turkish foeman and stranger rather than the Turks in our own circle and household. God will laugh at them when they cry to Him in the day of their distress, because they mocked at Him by their sins and refused to hearken to Him when He spoke, implored, exhorted, and did everything, stood and suffered everything, when His heart was troubled on their account, when He called

[1] To Justus Jonas, Jan. 26, 1543, *ib.*, p. 534.
[2] To Spalatin, Aug. 21, 1544, *ib.*, p. 679 f.
[3] To Amsdorf, April 14, 1545, *ib.*, p. 728.
[4] June 18, 1543, *ib.*, p. 570.

them by His holy prophets, and even rose up early on their account (Jer. vii. 13; xi. 7).[1] But such is their way; they know that it is God Whose Word we preach and yet they say: "We shan't listen. In short, the wildest of wild furies have broken into them," etc.[2]

Thus was he wont to rave when "excited," though not until, so at least he assures us, having first "by dint of much striving put down his anger, his thoughts and his temptations." "Blessed be the Lord Who has spoken to me, comforting me: 'Why callest thou? Let things go their own way.'" It grieves him, so he tells us, to see the country he loves going to rack and ruin; Germany is his fatherland, and, before his very eyes, it is hastening to destruction. "But God's ways are just, we may not resist them. May God have mercy on us for no one believes us." Even the doctrine of letting things go their own way—to which in his pessimism Luther grew attached in later life—he was firmly convinced had come to him directly from the Lord, Who had "consolingly" whispered to him these words. Even this saying reeks of his peculiar pseudo-mysticism.

All the above outbursts are, however, put into the shade by the utter ferocity of his ravings against Popery. Painful indeed are the effects of his gloomy frame of mind on his attitude towards Rome. The battle-cries, which, in one of his last works, viz. his "Wider das Babstum vom Teuffel gestifft," Luther hurls against the Church, which had once nourished him at her bosom, form one of the saddest instances of human aberration.

Yet, speaking of this work, the author assures a friend that, "in this angry book I have done justice neither to myself nor to the greatness of my anger; but I am quite aware that this I shall never be able to do."[3] "For no tongue can tell," so he says, "the appalling and frightful enormities of the Papal abomination, its substance, quantity, quality, predicaments, predicables, categories, its species, properties, differences and accidents."[4]

[1] To Justus Jonas, Feb. 25, 1542, *ib.*, p. 439: "*Carlstadii ista sunt monstra.*"

[2] *Ib.*: "*Furiis furiosis aguntur, quia ira Dei pervenit super eos usque in finem. Quare ergo propter istos perditos nos conficere volumus? Mitte, vadere sicut vadit.*"

[3] To Dr. Ratzeberger, the Elector's physician, Aug. 6, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 754.

[4] April 14, 1545, *ib.*, a letter not in the least intended as a joke.

The more distorted and monstrous his charges, the more they seem to have pleased him when in this temper.

In a morbid way he now heaps together his wonted hyperboles to such an extent, that, at times, it becomes very tiresome to read his writings and letters; no hateful image or suspicion seems to him sufficiently bad. "Though God Himself were to offer me Paradise for living another forty years, I should prefer to hire an executioner to chop off my head, for the world is so wicked; they are all becoming rank devils."[1] He compares his own times to those which went before the Flood; the "rain of filth will soon begin"; he goes on to say that he no longer understands his own times and finds himself as it were in a strange world; "either I have never seen the world, or, while I am asleep, a new world is born daily; not one but fancies he is suffering injustice, and not one but is convinced he does no injustice."[2] With a strange note of contempt he says: "Let the world be upset, kicked over and thrust aside, seeing it not only rejects and persecutes God's Word, but rages even against sound common sense. . . . Even the seven devils of Cologne, who sit in the highest temple, and who, like some of the council, still withstand us, will God overthrow, Who breaks down the cedars of Lebanon. On account of this [the actual and hoped-for successes at Cologne] we will rejoice in the Lord, because by His Word He does such great things before our very eyes."[3]

Here, as elsewhere too, in spite of all his ill-humour, the progress of his Evangel inspires him with hope. Nor is his dark mood entirely unbroken, for, from time to time, his love of a joke gets the better of it. His chief consolation was, however, his self-imposed conviction that his teaching was the true one.

A certain playfulness is apparent in many of his letters, for instance, in those to Jonas, one of his most intimate of friends: "Here is a conundrum," writes Luther to him, "which my guests ask me to put to you. Does God, the wise administrator, annually bestow on the children of men more wine or more milk? I think more milk; but do you give your answer. And a second question: Would a barrel that reached from Wittenberg to Kemberg be large and ample enough to hold all the wine that our unwise, silly, foolish God wastes and throws away on the most ungrateful of His children, setting it before Henries and Alberts, the

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 185. Rebenstock, in Bindseil, l.c.
[3] To Amsdorf, Aug. 18, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 584. Cp. p. 789: "*ne tandem fiat quod ante diluvium factum esse scribit Moises*," etc.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 585.

Pope and the Turk, all of them men who crucify His Son, whereas before His own children He sets nothing but water? You see that, though I am not much better than a corpse, I still love to chat and jest with you."[1]

In the Table-Talk, recently published by Kroker from the notes taken by Mathesius in the last years of Luther's life, the latter's irrepressible and saving tendency to jest is very apparent; his humour here is also more spontaneous than in his letters, with the possible exception of some of those he wrote to Catherine Bora.[2]

Suspicion and Mania of Persecution

A growing inclination to distrust, to seeing enemies everywhere and to indulging in fearsome, superstitious fancies, stamps with a peculiar impress his prevailing frame of mind.

His vivid imagination even led him, in April, 1544, to speak of "a league entered into between the Turks and the most holy, or rather most silly, Pope"; this was undoubtedly one of the "great signs" foretold by Christ; "these signs are here in truth and are truly great."[3] "The Pope would rather adore the Turk," he exclaims later, "nay, even Satan himself, than allow himself to be put in order and reformed by God's Word"; he even finds this confirmed in a new "Bull or Brief."[4] He has heard of the peace negotiations with the Turks on the part of the Pope and the Emperor, and of the neutrality of Paul III towards the Turcophil King of France; he is horrified to see in spirit an embassy of peace, "loaded with costly presents and clad in Turkish garments," wending its way to Constantinople, "there to worship the Turk." Such was the present policy of the Roman Satan, who formerly had used indulgences, annates and countless other forms of robbery to curtail the Turkish power. "Out upon these Christians, out upon these hellish idols of the devil!"[5]—The truth is that, whereas the Christian States winced at the difficulties

[1] Sep. 3, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 396.

[2] On the psychology of his humour, see below, xxxi., 5.

[3] To Justus Jonas, April 17, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 642. Cp. p. 629: "*testes fidelissimi*" report an alliance between the Pope, the Turks, French and Venetians against the Emperor. "Now give a cheer for the Pope."

[4] To Amsdorf, Jan. 9, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 713.

[5] To Amsdorf, July 17, 1545, *ib.*, p. 750 f.

or sought for delay, Pope Paul III, faithful to the traditional policy of the Holy See, insisted that it was necessary to oppose by every possible means the Turk who was the Church's foe and threatened Europe with ruin. The only ground that Luther can have had for his suspicions will have been the better relations then existing between the Pope and France which led the Turkish fleet to spare the Papal territory on the occasion of its demonstration at the mouth of the Tiber.[1]

But Luther was convinced that the Pope had no dearer hope than to thwart Germany, and the Protesters in particular. It was the Pope and the Papists whom he accused to Duke Albert of Prussia of being behind the Court of Brunswick and of hiring, at a high price, the services of assassins and incendiaries. To Wenceslaus Link he says, that it will be the priests' own fault if the saying "To death with the priests" is carried into practice;[2] to Melanchthon he also writes: "I verily believe that all the priests are bent on being killed, even against our wish."[3]—It was the Papists sure enough, who introduced the maid Rosina into his house, in order that she might bring it into disrepute by her immoral life;[4] they had also sent men to murder him, from whom, however, God had preserved him;[5] they had likewise tried to poison him, but all to no purpose.[6] We may recall how he had said: "I believe that my pulpit-chair and cushion were frequently poisoned, yet God preserved me."[7] "Many attempts, as I believe, have been made to poison me."[8]

He had even once declared that poisoning was a regular business with Satan: "He can bring death by means of a leaflet from off a tree; he has more poison phials and kinds of death at his beck and call than all the apothecaries in all the world; if one poison doesn't work he uses another."[9] He had long been convinced that the devil was able to carry through the air those who made themselves over to him; "we must not call in the devil,

[1] Cp. Pastor, "Hist. of the Popes" (Engl. Trans.), vol. x.
[2] June-July, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 379.
[3] June, 22, 1541, *ib.*, p. 372.
[4] Vol. iii., pp. 217, 280 f.
[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 155.
[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 423. In 1537.
[7] Above, vol. iii., p. 116.
[8] "Colloq.," l.c., p. 156. Cp. Rebenstock, in Bindseil, l.c.
[9] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 125.

for he comes often enough uncalled, and loves to be by us, hardened foe of ours though he be. . . . He is indeed a great and mighty enemy."[1] Towards the end of his life, in 1541, it came to his ears that the devil was more than usually busy with his poisons: "At Jena and elsewhere," so he warns Melanchthon, "the devil has let loose his poisoners. It is a wonder to me why the great, knowing the fury of Satan, are not more watchful. Here it is impossible any longer to buy or to use anything with safety." Melanchthon was therefore to be careful when invited out; at Erfurt the spices and aromatic drugs on sale in the shops had been found to be mixed with poison; at Altenburg as many as twelve people had died from poison taken in a single meal. Anxious as he was about his friend, his trust was nevertheless unshaken in the protection of God and the angels. I myself am still in the hands of my Moses (Katey), he adds, "suffering from a filthy discharge from my ear and meditating in turn on life and on death. God's Will be done. Amen. May you be happy in the Lord now and for ever."[2]

"A new art of killing us," so he tells Melanchthon in the same year, had been invented by Satan, viz. of mixing poison with our wine and milk; at Jena twelve persons were said to have died of poisoned wine, "though more likely of too much drink"; at Magdeburg and Nordhausen, however, milk had been found in the possession of the sellers that seemed to have been poisoned. "At any rate, all things lie under Christ's feet, and we shall suffer so long and as much as He pleases. For the nonce we are supreme and they [the Papist 'monsters'] are hurrying to destruction. . . . So long as the Lord of Heaven is at the helm we are safe, live and reign and have our foes under our feet. Amen." Casting all fear to the winds he goes on to comfort Melanchthon and his faint-hearted comrades in the tone of the mystic: "Fear not; you are angels, nay, great angels or archangels, working, not for us but for the Church, nay, for God, Whose cause it is that you uphold, as even the very gates of hell must admit; these, though they may indeed block our way, cannot overcome us, because at the very beginning of the world the hostile, snarling dragon was overthrown by the Lion of the tribe of Juda."[3]

The hostility of the Papists to Lutheranism, had, so Luther thought, been manifestly punished by Heaven in the defeat of Henry of Brunswick; it had "already been foretold in the prophecies pronounced against him," which had forecasted his destruction as the "son of perdition"; he was a "warning example set up by God for the tyrants

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 156.

[2] To Melanchthon, April 20, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 346; "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 308.

[3] To Melanchthon, March 24, 1541, *ib.*, p. 336=279.

of our days " ; for every contemner of the Word is " plainly a tyrant."[1]

Luther was very suspicious of Melanchthon, Bucer and others who leaned towards the Zwinglian doctrine on the Supper. So much had Magister Philippus, his one-time right-hand man, to feel his displeasure and irritability that the latter bewails his lot of having to dwell as it were " in the very den of the Cyclopes " and with a real " tyrant." " There is much in one's intercourse with Luther," so Cruciger said confidentially, in 1545, in a letter to Veit Dietrich, " that repels those who have a will of their own and attach some importance to their own judgment ; if only he would not, through listening to the gossip of outsiders, take fire so quickly, chiding those who are blameless and breaking out into fits of temper ; this, often enough, does harm even in matters of great moment."[2] Luther himself was by no means unwilling to admit his faults in this direction and endeavoured to make up for them by occasionally praising his fellow-workers in fulsome terms ; Yet so deep-seated was his suspicion of Melanchthon's orthodoxy, that he even thought for a while of embodying his doctrine on the Sacrament in a formulary, which should condemn all his opponents and which all his friends, particularly those whom he had reason to mistrust, should be compelled to sign. This, according to Bucer, would have involved the departure of Melanchthon into exile. Bucer expressed his indignation at this projected " abominable condemnation " and at the treatment meted out to Melanchthon by Luther.[3]

Bucer himself was several times the object of Luther's wrath, for instance, for his part in the " Cologne Book of Reform " : " It is nothing but a lot of twaddle in which I clearly detect the influence of that chatterbox Bucer."[4] When Jakob Schenk arrived at Wittenberg after a long absence Luther was so angry with him for not sharing his views as to refuse to receive him when he called ; he did

[1] To Jakob Probst, Pastor at Bremen, Oct. 9, 1542, " Briefe," 5, p. 501.

[2] On Feb. 23, 1545, see Döllinger, " Reformation," 3, p. 269, n. 208, from MS.

[3] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 582. On Melanchthon, cp. above, vol. iii., p. 370.

[4] To Chancellor Brück, 1544, " Briefe," 5, p. 708.

the same in the case of Agricola, in spite of the fact that the latter brought a letter of recommendation from the Margrave of Brandenburg ; in one of his letters calls him : " the worst of hypocrites, an impenitent man ! "[1] From such a monster, so he said, he would take nothing but a sentence of condemnation. As for his former friend Schenk, he ironically offers him to Bishop Amsdorf as a helper in the ministry. On both of them he persisted in bestowing his old favourite nicknames, Jeckel and Grickel (Jakob and Agricola).

Luther's Single-handed Struggle with the Powers of Evil

Owing to the theological opinions reached by some of his one-time friends Luther, as may well be understood, began to be oppressed by a feeling of lonesomeness.

The devil, whom he at least suspected of being the cause of his bodily pains,[2] is now backing the Popish teachers, and making him to be slighted. But, by so doing, thanks to Luther's perseverance and bold defiance, he will only succeed in magnifying Christ the more.

" He hopes to get the better of us or to make us downhearted. But, as the Germans say, *cacabimus in os eius.* Willy-nilly, he shall suffer until his head is crushed, much as he may, with horrible gnashing of teeth, threaten to devour us. We preach the Seed of the woman ; Him do we confess and to Him would we assign the first place, wherefore He is with us."[3] In his painful loneliness he praises " the heavenly Father Who has hidden these things [Luther's views on religion] from the wise and prudent and has revealed them to babes and little ones who cannot talk, let alone preach, and are neither clever nor learned."[4] This he says in a sermon. The clever doctors, he adds, " want to make God their pupil ; everyone is anxious to be His schoolmaster and tutor. And so it has ever been among the heretics. . . . In the Christian churches one bishop nags at the other, and each pastor snaps at his neighbour. . . . These are the real wiselings of whom Christ speaks who know a lot about horses' bowels, but who do not keep to the road which God Himself has traced for us, but must always go their own little way." Indeed it is the fate of " everything that God has instituted to be perverted by the devil," by " saucy folk and clever people." " The devil has indeed smeared us well over with fools. But they are accounted

[1] To Amsdorf, May 2, 1545, *ib.*, p. 734.
[2] To Amsdorf, Aug. 18, 1543, *ib.*, p. 585 : " *an colaphus Satanæ ?* "
[3] To Anton Lauterbach, Nov. 3, 1543, " Briefe," 5, p. 599.
[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 561 f., in his last sermon, Feb. 14, 1546, on Mt. xi. 25 ff.

wise and prudent simply because they rule and hold office in the Churches."[1]

Let us leave them alone then and turn our backs on them, no matter how few we be, for "God will not bear in His Christian Churches men who twist His Divine Word, even though they be called Pope, Emperor, Kings, Princes or Doctors. . . . We ourselves have had much to do with such wiselings, who have taken it upon themselves to bring about unity or reform."[2] "They fancy that because they are in power they have a deeper insight into Scripture than other people."[3] "The devil drives such men so that they seek their own praise and glory in Holy Scripture." But do you say: I will listen to a teacher "only so long as he leads me to the Son of God," the true master and preceptor, i.e. in other words, so long as he teaches the truth.[4]

In his confusion of mind Luther does not perceive to what his proviso "so long as" amounts. It was practically the same as committing the decision concerning what was good for salvation to the hands of every man, however ignorant or incapable of sound judgment. Luther's real criterion remained, however, his own opinion. "If anyone teaches another Gospel," he says in this very sermon,[5] "contrary to that which we have proclaimed to you, let him be anathema" (cp. Gal. i. 8). The reason why people will not listen to him is, as he here tells them, because, by means of the filth of his arch-knaves and liars, "the devil in the world misleads and fools all."

Luther was convinced that he was the "last trump," which was to herald in the destruction, not only of Satan and the Papacy, but also of the world itself. "We are weak and but indifferent trumpeters, but, to the assembly of the heavenly spirits, ours is a mighty call." "They will obey us and our trump, and the end of the world will follow. Amen."[6]

Meanwhile, however, he notes with many misgivings the manifestations of the evil one. He even intended to collect in book form the instances of such awe-inspiring portents ("*satanæ portenta*") and to have them printed.

For this purpose he begged Jonas to send him once more a detailed account of the case of a certain Frau Rauchhaupt, which would have come under this category; he tells his friend that the object of his new book is to "startle" the people who lull themselves in such a state of false security that not only do they scorn the wholesome marvels of the Gospel with which we are daily overwhelmed, but actually make light of the real "furies of furies" of the wickedness of the world; they must read such

[1] *Ib.*, p. 562 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 565. [3] *Ib.*, p. 564.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 566 f. [5] *Ib.*, p. 571.
[6] To Ratzeberger, the Elector's medical adviser, Aug. 6, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 754; "*Credo nos esse tubam illam novissimam*," etc.

marvellous stories, for "they are too prone to believe neither in the goodness of God nor in the wickedness of the devil, and too set on becoming, as indeed they are already, just bellies and nothing more."[1]—Thus, when Lauterbach told him of three suicides who had ended their lives with the halter, he at once insisted that it was really Satan who had strung them up while making them to think that it was they themselves who committed the crime. "The Prince of this world is everywhere at work." "God, in permitting such crimes, is causing the wrath of heaven to play over the world like summer lightning, that ungrateful men, who fling the Gospel to the winds, may see what is in store for them." "Such happenings must be brought to the people's knowledge so that they may learn to fear God."[2] Happily the book that was to have contained these tales of horror never saw the light; the author's days were numbered.

The outward signs, whether in the heavens or on the earth, "whereby Satan seeks to deceive," were now scrutinised by Luther more superstitiously than ever.

Talking at table about a thunder-clap which had been heard in winter, he quite agreed with Bugenhagen "that it was downright Satanic." "People," he complains, "pay no heed to the portents of this kind which occur without number." Melanchthon had an experience of this sort before the death of Franz von Sickingen. Others, whom Luther mentions, saw wonderful signs in the heavens and armies at grips; the year before the coming of the Evangel wonders were seen in the stars; "these are in every instance lying portents of Satan; nothing certain is foretold by them; during the last fifteen years there have been many of them; the only thing certain is that we have to expect the coming wrath of God."[3] Years before, the signs in the heavens and on the earth, for instance the flood promised for 1524, had seemed to him to forebode the "world upheaval" which his Evangel would bring.[4]

Luther shared to the full the superstition of his day. He did not stand alone when he thus interpreted public events and everyday occurrences. It was the fashion in those days for people, even in Catholic circles, superstitiously to look out for portents and signs.

In 1537[5] Luther relates some far-fetched tales of this sort. The most devoted servants of the devil are, according to him, the sorcerers and witches of whom there are many.[6] In 1540

[1] To Jonas at Halle, Jan. 23, 1542, *ib.*, p. 429.

[2] To Lauterbach, July 25, 1542, *ib.*, p. 487.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 385 f. (Dec., 1536).

[4] To Wenceslaus Link, Jan. 14, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 72: "*videns, rem tumultuosissimo tumultu tumultuantem; forte hæc est inundatio illa prædicta anno* 24 *futura.*"

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 423, concluding: "*Videte, tanta est potentia Sathanæ in deludendis sensibus externis; quid faciet in animabus?*"

[6] Cp. N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrh.," 1910, particularly pp. 20 f., 48 ff.

he related to his guests how a schoolmaster had summoned the witches by means of a horse's head.[1] "Repeatedly," so he told them in that same year, "they did their best to harm me and my Katey, but God preserved us." On another occasion, after telling some dreadful tales of sorcery, he adds: "The devil is a mighty spirit." "Did not God and His dear angels intervene, he would surely slay us with those thunder-clubs of his which you call thunderbolts."[2] In earlier days he had told them, that, Dr. "Faust, who claimed the devil as his brother-in-law, had declared that 'if I, Martin Luther, had only shaken hands with him he would have destroyed me'; but I would not have been afraid of him, but would have shaken hands with him in God's name and reckoning on God's protection."[3]

According to him, most noteworthy of all were the diabolical deeds then on the increase which portended a mighty revulsion and a catastrophe in the world's history. Everything, his laboured calculations on the numbers in the biblical prophecies included, all point to this. Even the appearance of a new kind of fox in 1545 seemed to him of such importance that he submitted the case to an expert huntsman for an opinion. He himself was unable to decide what it signified, "unless it be that change in all things which we await and for which we pray."[4]

The change to which he here and so often elsewhere refers is the end of the world.

2. Luther's Fanatical Expectation of the End of the World. His hopeless Pessimism

The excitement with which Luther looks forward to the approaching end of the world affords a curious psychological medley of joy and fear, hope and defiance; his conviction reposed on a wrong reading of the Bible, on a too high estimate of his own work, on his sad experience of men and on his superstitious observance of certain events of the outside world.

The fact that the end of all was nigh gradually became an absolute certainty with him. In his latter days it grew into one of those ideas around which, as around so many

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 227. [2] *Ib.*, p. 129.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 422, from Lauterbach and Weller's Notes in the summer, 1537.

[4] To Amsdorf, June 3, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 741. Amsdorf had sent an inquiry "*de monstro illo vulpium*."

fixed stars, his other plans, fancies and grounds for consolation revolve. To the depth of his conviction his excessive credulity and that habit—which he shared with his contemporaries—of reading things into natural events contributed not a little.

A remarkable conjunction of the planets in 1524,[1] "other signs which have been described elsewhere, such as earthquakes, pestilences, famines and wars," a predicted flood[2]—"all these signs agree"[3] in announcing the great day; never have "more numerous and greater signs" occurred during the whole course of the world's history to vouch for the forthcoming end of the world.[4] "All the firmaments and courses of the heavens are declining and coming to an end; the Elbe has stood for a whole year at the same low level, this also is a portent."[5] Such signs invite us to be watchful.[6] Over and above all this we have the "many gruesome dreams of the Last Judgment" with which he was plagued in later years.[7]

He describes to his friends quite confidently the manner of the coming of the end such as he pictures it to himself: "Early one morning, about the time of the spring equinox, a thick black cloud, three lightning flashes and a thunder-clap, and, presto, everything will lie in ruins," etc. "I am ever awaiting the day."[8] "Things may go on for some years longer,"[9] perhaps for "five or six years," but no more, because "the wickedness of men has increased so dreadfully within so short a time."[10] "We shall live to see the day"; Aggeus (ii. 7 f.) says: "Yet a little while and I will shake the heaven and the earth": look around you: "surely the State is being shaken . . . the household too, and even the very mob, item our own very sons and daughters. The Church too totters."[11]

"All the great wonders have already taken place; the Pope has been unmasked; the world rages. Nor will things improve until the Last Day comes. I hope, however, now that the Evangel is so greatly despised, that the Last Day is no longer far distant, not more than a hundred years off. God's Word will again decline . . . and the world will become quite savage and epicurean."[12]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 69 f. Kirchenpostille. [2] *Ib.*
[3] To Jonas, Dec. 16, 1543. "Briefe," 5, p. 612: "*congruunt omnia signa.*"
[4] In the "Chronology of the World." "Werke," Walch's ed., 14, p. 1278, from the Latin MS. See above, vol. iii., p. 147 f.
[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 22. [6] *Ib.*, p. 33.
[7] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 86.
[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 208; "Historien," p. 143. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 62, pp. 18, 25, "Tischreden."
[9] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1., p. 85.
[10] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 206.
[11] *Ib.*, 62, p. 23. [12] *Ib.*, p. 24 f.

Reason and Ground of Luther's Conviction of the near End of the World

The actual origin and basis of this strange idea are plainly expressed in the statement last quoted: "The Pope is unmasked" as Antichrist, such was Luther's starting-point. Further, "the Evangel is despised," by his own followers no less than by his foes; this depressing sight, together with the sad outlook for religion generally, formed the ground on which Luther's conviction of the coming cataclysm grew, particularly when the fall of the Papacy seemed to be unduly delayed, and its strength to be even on the increase. The Bible texts which he twists into his service are an outcome rather than the cause of his conviction concerning Antichrist, while the "signs" in the heavens and on earth also serve merely to confirm a persuasion derived from elsewhere.

The starting-point of the idea and the soil on which it grew deserve to be considered separately.

Luther's views on the unmasking of Antichrist and the approaching end of the world carry us back to the early years of his career. Soon after beginning his attack on the Church, he, over and over again, declared that he had been called to reveal the Pope as Antichrist.[1] His breach with the ecclesiastical past was so far-reaching that he could not have expressed his position and indicated the full extent of his aims better than by so radical an apocalyptic announcement. Nor did it sound so entirely strange to the world. Even according to Wiclif the Papal power was the power of "Antichrist" and the Roman Church the "Synagogue of Satan"; John Hus likewise taught, that it was Antichrist who, by means of the Papal penalties, was seeking to affright those who were after "unmasking" him.

The idea of Antichrist in Luther's mind embodied all the wickedness of the Roman Church which it was his purpose to unmask, all the religious perversion of which he wished to make an end, and, in a word, the dominion of the devil against which he fancied he was to proclaim the last and decisive combat. When, by dint of insisting in his writings,

[1] See above, vol. iii., p. 141 ff., on the rise of his idea of the Pope as Antichrist.

over and over again, and in the most drastic of ways, on the Papal Antichrist, the idea came to assume its definitive shape in his own mind, his announcement of the end of the world could not be any longer delayed; for, according to the generally accepted view, Antichrist was directly to precede the coming of Christ to Judgment, or at least the latter's coming would not be long delayed after the revelation of Antichrist in his true colours.[1] As a rule Antichrist was taken to be a person; Luther, however, saw Antichrist in the Papacy as a whole. Antichrist had had a long spell of life; the last Pope would, however, soon fall, he, Luther, with Christ's help, was preparing his overthrow, then the end would come—such is the sum of Luther's eschatological statements during the first period of his career.

Speaking of the end of the world he often says, that the fall of the Papacy involves it. "Assuredly," he says, the end will shortly follow on account of the manifest wickedness of the Pope and the Papists. According to him, the Bible itself teaches that, "after the downfall of the Pope and the deliverance of the poor, no one on earth would ever again be a tyrant and inspire fear." "This would not be possible," so Luther thinks, "were the world to go on after the fall of the Pope, for the world cannot exist without tyrants. And thus the Prophet agrees with the Apostle, viz. that Christ, when He comes, will upset the Holy Roman Chair. God grant it may happen speedily. Amen!"[2]

In his fantastic interpretation of the Monk-Calf he declares in a similar way, that the near end of the world is certain in view of the abominations of the sinking Papacy and its monkish system, which last is symbolised in the wonderful calf: "My wish and hope are that it may mean the Last Day, since many signs have so far coincided, and the whole world is as it were in an uproar,"[3] the source of the whole to-do being his triumphant contest with Antichrist. In the same way his conviction of the magnitude and success of his mission against the foe of Christ gives the key to his curious reading of Daniel and the Epistle to the Thessalonians with regard to the time of Antichrist's advent and the end of the world, which we find set forth quite seriously in his reply to Catharinus.[4] In short, "Antichrist will be revealed whatever the world may do; after this Christ must come with His Judgment Day."[5]

[1] Cp. the index to Walch's edition, vol. xxiii., *s.v.* "Antichrist" and "Widerchrist."

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 719; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 203, "Bulla Cœnæ Domini" (1522), appendix.

[3] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 646. On the Monk-Calf, see vol. iii., p. 149 f.

[4] On this Reply see vol. iii., p. 142.

[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 72.

When the Papacy, instead of collapsing, began to gather strength and even proceeded to summon a Council, Luther did not cease foretelling its fall; he predicts the end of the world in terms even stronger than before, though the reason he assigns for his forebodings is more and more the "contempt shown for the Word," i.e. for his teaching and exhortations. Disgust, disappointment and the gloomy outlook for the future of his work are now his chief grounds for expecting the end of all and for ardently hoping that the Day will soon dawn. . . . It is the self-seeking and vice so prevalent in his own fold which wrings from him the exclamation: "It must soon come to a head,"[1] for things cannot long go on thus.

The last temptation which shall assail the faithful, he says, will be "an undisciplined life"; then we shall "grow sick of the Word and disgusted with it." "Not even the Word of God will they endure; . . . the Gospel which they [his own people] once confessed, they now look upon as merely the word of man." "Do you fancy you are out of the world, or that Satan, the Prince of this world, has died or been crucified in you?"[2] It is bitter experience that causes him to say: "The day will dawn when Christ shall come to free us from sin and death."[3] "May the world go to rack and ruin and be utterly blotted out," "the world which has shown me such gratitude during my own lifetime!"[4] "May the Lord call me away, for I have done, and seen, and suffered enough evil."[5] "Would that the Lord would put an end to the great misery [that among us each one does as he pleases]! Oh that the day of our deliverance would come!"[6] "The people have waxed cold towards the Evangel. . . . May Christ mend all things and hasten the Day of His Coming."[7]

"It is a wonder to me what the world does to-day," he said, alluding to the turmoil in the newly acquired bishopric of Naumburg; he then goes on to complain in the words already given (p. 233), that a new world is growing up around him; no one will admit of having done wrong, of having lied or sinned; those only who meet with injustice are reputed unrighteous, liars and sinners. Verily it would soon rain filth. "The day of our redemption draweth nigh. Amen." "The world will rage, but

[1] To Jonas, Dec. 16, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 612.
[2] To Link, Sep. 8, 1541, *ib.*, p. 398.
[3] To Jonas, March 13, 1542, *ib.*, p. 445.
[4] To Jonas, Feb. 25, 1542, *ib.*, p. 439.
[5] To Jonas, May 3, 1541, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 328: "*Ego et ægrotus et pæne morosus sum, tædio rerum et morborum. Utinam me Deus evocet misericorditer ad sese. Satis malorum feci, vidi, passus sum.*"
[6] To Lauterbach, April 2, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 551: "*ubique grassatur licentia et petulantia vulgi.*" Cp. p. 552.
[7] To the Evangelical Brethren at Venice, June 13, 1543, *ib.*, p. 569.

good-bye to it"![1]—"The world is indeed a contemptible thing," he groans, after describing the morals of Wittenberg.[2]

The conduct of the great ones at the Saxon Court led him to surmise that "soon," after but a few days, hell would be their portion.[3] For those who infringe the rights of his Church he has a similar sentence ready: "Hell will be your share. Come, Lord Jesus, come, listen to the groaning of Thy people, and hasten Thy coming!"—"Farewell and teach your people to pray for the day of the Lord; for of better times there is no longer any hope."[4]

"During our lifetime," he laments in 1545, "and under our very eyes, we see sects and dissensions arising, each one wishing to follow his own fancy. In short, contempt for the Word on our own side and blasphemy on the other seem to me to announce the times of which John the Baptist spoke to the people, saying: 'The axe is laid to the root of the tree,' etc. Accordingly, since the end at least of this happy age is imminent, there seems no call to bother much about setting up, or coming to an understanding regarding, those troublesome ceremonies."[5]

In fact, he is determined not "to bother much," not merely about the "ceremonies," but about the whole question of Church organisation, for of what use doing so when the signs of the general end of all are increasing at such a rate? "To set up laws" is, according to him, quite impracticable; let everything settle itself "according to the law of God by means of the inspection."[6]

"To Luther the end which Christ was about to put to this wicked world seemed so near," so we read in Köstlin-Kawerau's biography,[7] "that he never contemplated any progressive development and expansion of Christendom and the Church, nor was he at all anxious about the possible ups and downs which might accompany such development. . . . It is just in his later years that we find him more firmly established than ever in the belief, that the world will always remain the world and that it must be left to the Lord to take what course He pleases with it and with His Christendom, until the coming of the 'longed-for Last Day.'"

At any rate, since the sectarians in his own camp and the various centrifugal forces inherent in his creation made impossible any real organisation, he was all the more ready

[1] To Amsdorf, Aug. 18, 1543, *ib.*, p. 584.
[2] To Jonas, June 18, 1543, *ib.*, p. 570.
[3] To Lauterbach, Nov. 3, 1543, *ib.*, p. 599.
[4] To Jonas, Dec. 16, 1543, *ib.*, p. 610.
[5] To Duke George of Anhalt, July 10, 1545, *ib.*, 6, p. 370. [6] *Ib.*
[7] Vol. ii,, p. 522.

to welcome the thought of the end of the world in that it distracted his mind from the sad state of things.

On the top of the schisms and immorality of the people there was also the avarice of those in high places, which roused his hatred and contributed to make him sigh for the coming of the Day.

"They all rage against God and His Messias." "This is the work of those centaurs, the foes of the Church, kept in store for the latter days. They are more insatiable than hell itself. But Christ, Who will shortly come in His glory, will quiet them, not indeed with gold, but with brimstone and flames of hell, and with the wrath of God."[1] It was his displeasure against some of the authorities which wrung from him the words: "But the end is close at hand," the end which will also spell the end of "all this seizing—or rather thieving greed for Church property—of the Princes, nobles and magistrates, hateful and execrable that it is."[2] Taking this in conjunction with the attitude of the Catholic rulers he could say with greater confidence than ever: "Nothing good is to be hoped for any more but this alone, that the day of the glory of our great God and our Redeemer may speedily break upon us." "From so Satanic a world" he would fain be "quickly snatched," longing as he does for the Day and for the "end of Satan's raging."[3]

The End of the World in the Table-Talk

In the above we have drawn on Luther's letters. If we turn to his Table-Talk, particularly to that dating from his later years, we find that there, too, his frequent allusions to the approaching end of the world are as a rule connected with his experience of the corruption in his surroundings, especially at Wittenberg. The carelessness of the young is sufficient to make him long for the Last Day, which alone seemed to promise any help.

To Melanchthon, who, with much concern, had drawn his attention to the lawlessness of the students, Luther poured out his soul, as we read in Lauterbach's Diary: As the students were growing daily wilder he hoped that, "if God wills, the Last Day be not far off, the Day which shall put an end to all things."[4] "The ingratitude and profanity of the world," he also says, "makes me apprehend that this light [of the Evangel] will not last long." "The refinement of malice, thanklessness and dis-

[1] To Lauterbach, Feb. 9, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 629.
[2] To Amsdorf, June 23, 1544, *ib.*, p. 670.
[3] To Probst, Dec. 5, 1544, *ib.*, p. 703.
[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch" (1538), p. 34.

respect shown towards the Gospel now revealed" is so great "that the Last Day cannot be far off."[1]

In his Table-Talk, where Luther is naturally more communicative than in his letters, we see even more plainly how deeply the idea of the approaching Day of Judgment had sunk into his mind and under how curious a shape it there abides. "Things will get so bad on this earth," he says, for instance, "that men will cry out everywhere: O God, come with Thy Last Judgment." He would not mind "eating the agate Paternoster" (a string of beads he wore round his neck) if only that would make the Day "come on the morrow."[2] "The end is at the door," he continues, "the world is on the lees; if anyone wants to begin something let him hurry up and make a start."[3] "The next day he again spoke much of the end of the world, having had many evil dreams of the Last Judgment during the previous six months"; it was imminent, for Scripture said so; the present hangs like a ripe apple on the tree; the Roman Empire, "the last sweet-william" would also soon tumble to the ground.[4]

In 1530 Luther was disposed to regard the Roman Empire under Charles V with a rather more favourable eye. His impression then was that the Empire, "under our Emperor Carol, is beginning to look up and becoming more powerful than it was for many a year"; yet strange to say he knew how to bring even this fact into connection with the Judgment Day; for this strengthening of the Empire "seems to me," so he goes on, "like a sort of last effort; for when a light or wisp of straw has burnt down and is about to go out it sends up a flame and seems just about to flare up bravely when suddenly it dies out; this is what Christendom is now doing thanks to the bright Evangel."[5] Hence all he could see was the last flicker both of the Empire and of the new teaching before final extinction.

The noteworthy utterance about the last flicker of the Lutheran Evangel occurs also in the Table-Talk collected by Mathesius dating from the years 1542 and 1543. "I believe that the Last Day is not far off. The reason is that we now see the last effort of the Evangel; this resembles a light; when a light is about to expire it sends up at the last a sudden flame as though it were going to burn for quite a long while and thereupon goes out. And, though it appears now as though the Evangel were about to be spread abroad, I fear it will suddenly expire and the Last Day come. It is the same with a sick man; when at the point of death he seems quite cheerful and on the high road to recovery, and, then, suddenly, he is gone."[6]

The Table-Talk from the Mathesius collection recently pub-

[1] P. 172 f.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," (1531 and 1532), p. 17.
[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, pp. 85, 86.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 86.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 41, p. 233.
[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 282. Cp. Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," ed. Lœsche, p. 393.

lished by Kroker, among other curious utterances of Luther's on the end of the world, contains also the following :

In view of the dissensions by which the new Evangel was torn the speaker says, in 1542-43 : "If the world goes on for another fifty years things will become worse than ever, for sects will arise which still lie hidden in the hearts of men, so that we shall not know where we stand. Hence, dear Lord, come ! Come and overwhelm them with Thy Judgment Day, for no improvement is any longer to be looked for."[1]

Here too he repeatedly declares that he himself is tired of the world : "I have had enough of the world," he says, and goes on to introduce the ugly comparison alluded to above.[2] He adds: "The world fancies that if only it were rid of me all would be well." He is saddened to see that many of his followers make little account of him : "If the Princes and gentry won't do it, then things will not last long."[3] Of the want of respect shown to his preachers he says : "Where there is such contempt of the Divine Word and of the preachers, shall not God smite with His fist ?" "But if we preachers were to meet and agree amongst ourselves, as has been done in the Papacy, there would be less need for this. The worst of it is that they are not at one even amongst themselves." He finds a makeshift consolation for the divergency in teaching in the thought that "so it always was even from the beginning of the world, preachers always having disagreed amongst themselves." "There is a bad time coming, look you to it" ; things may go on for another fifty years now that the young have been brought up in his doctrine, but, after that, "let them look out. Hence, let no one fear the plague, but rather be glad to die."[4] Not only did he look forward to his own death, but, as we know, to that of "all his children," seeing that strange things would happen in the world.[5]

We have heard him say, that it was a mercy for the young, that, being thoughtless and without experience, they did not see the harm caused by the scandals, "else they could not endure to live."[6] And, that the world could "not possibly last long." Its hours are numbered, for, thanks to me, "everything has now been put straight. The Gospel has been revealed."[7]

"Christ said, that, at His coming, faith would be hard to find on the earth (Luke xviii. 8). That is true, for the whole of Asia and Africa is without the Evangel, and even as regards Europe no Gospel is preached in Greece, Italy, Hungary, Spain, France, England or Poland. The one little bright spot, the house of Saxony, will not hinder the coming of the Last Day."[8]

"Praise be to God Who has taught us to sigh after it and long for it ! In Popery everybody dreads it."[9]

"Amen, so be it, Amen !" so he sighed in 1543 in a letter to

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 287. [2] Above, p. 229.
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 131.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 289. [5] *Ib.*, p. 288.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 179. [7] *Ib.*, p. 108. [8] *Ib.*, p. 209.
[9] *Ib.*, p. 111.

Amsdorf alluding to the end of the world. "The world was just like this before the Flood, before the Babylonian captivity, before the destruction of Jerusalem, before the devastation of Rome and before the misfortunes of Greece and Hungary; so it will be and so it is before the ruin of Germany too. They refuse to listen, so they must be made to feel. I should be glad to console ourselves both, by discussing this thought [of the contempt of the Papists for us] with you by word of mouth." "We will leave them in the lurch" and cease from attempting their conversion. "Farewell in the Lord, Who is our Helper and Who will help us for ever and ever. Amen."[1]

"Under the Pope," we read in the Colloquies, "at least the name of Christ was retained, but our thanklessness and presumptuous sense of security will bring things to such a pass that Christ will be no longer even named, and so the words of the Master already quoted will be fulfilled according to which, at His coming, no faith will remain on the earth."[2]

As to the circumstances which should accompany the end of the world, he still expected the catastrophe to take place most likely about Easter time, "early in the morning, after a thunderstorm of an hour or perhaps a little more."[3]

Here he no longer gives the world "a bare hundred years more," nor even something "not more than fifty years";[4] he almost expects the end to come before the completion of his translation of the Bible into German.[5] The world will certainly not last until 1548, so he declared, "for this would run counter to Ezechiel."[6] He is not quite sure whether the Golden Age begins in 1540 or not, though such was the contention of the mathematicians; but "we shall see the fulfilment of Scripture,"[7] or at any rate, as he prudently adds elsewhere, our descendants will. But before this can come the "great light" of faith would have to be dimmed still more.[8]

Luther concludes by saying that he is unable to suggest anything further; he had done all he could; God's vengeance on the world was so great, he declares, that he could no longer give any advice; for "amongst us whom God has treated so mercifully and on whom He has bestowed all His Graces there is nothing left that is not corrupted and perverted."[9] "On divine authority we began to amend the world, but it refuses to hearken; hence let it crumble to ruins, for such is its fate!"[10]

In his predictions concerning the end of the world Luther did not sufficiently take to heart the mishap which befell his pupil and friend Michael Stiefel, though he himself had been

[1] To Amsdorf, Nov. 7, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 600.
[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 87. [3] *Ib.*, p. 89.
[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 172 f.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 41, p. 233.
[6] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 130.
[7] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 86. [8] *Ib.*, p. 87.
[9] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 95 f. [10] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 30.

at pains to reprove him. Stiefel had calculated that the end of the world would come at 8 a.m. on Oct. 19, 1533, at which hour he and his parishioners awaited it assembled in the church at Lochau. Their watch was, however, in vain ; the world continued to go its way and the Court judged it expedient to remove the preacher for a while from his post.

Taking these eschatological ideas or rather ardent wishes of Luther's later life in all their bearings, and giving due weight to the almost unbounded dominion they exercised over his mind, one might well incline to see in them signs of an unhealthy and overwrought mind. They seem to have been due to excessive mental strain, to the reaction following on the labours of his long life's struggle in the cause of his mission. It is not unlikely that pathology played some part in the depression from which he suffered.

His early theological development also throws some light on the psychological problem, owing to a parallel which it affords.

The middle-point and mainstay of his theology, viz. his doctrine of Justification, was wholly a result of his own personal feelings; after cutting it, so to speak, to his own measure he proceeded to make it something of world-wide application, a doctrine which should rule every detail of religious life, and around which all theology should cluster if it is to be properly understood. In a similar way, after beginning by adapting to his own case the theory of the near end of the world—to which he was early addicted—he gradually came to find in it the clue wherewith to unravel all the knotty problems which began to present themselves. It became his favourite plan to regard everything in the light of the end of the world and advent of Christ. Just as he was fond of asseverating, in spite of all the contradictions it involved, that he could find in his dogma of Justification endless comfort for both himself and the faithful, so, too, he came to regard the Last Day, in spite of all its terrors, as the source of the highest, nay, of the only remaining, joy of life, for himself and for all. With a vehemence incomprehensible to sober reason he allowed himself to be carried away by this idea as he had been by others. Such was his temperament that he could rejoice in the coming of the Judge, Who should deliver him from the bonds of despair.

Hence Luther's expectation of the end of the world was

something very different from that of certain Saints of whom Church-history tells us. Pope Gregory I or Vincent Ferrer were not moved to foretell the approaching end of the world by disgust with life, by disappointment, or as a result of waging an unequal struggle with the Church of their day, nor again because they regarded the destruction of the world as the only escape from the confusion they had brought about. Nor do they speak of the end of the world with any fanatical expectation of their own personal salvation, but rather with a mixture of fear and calm trust in God's bounty to the righteous; they have none of Luther's pessimism concerning the world, and, far from desiring things to "take their course,"[1] they exerted every nerve to ensure the everlasting salvation of as many of their fellow-creatures as possible before the advent of the Judge; to this end they had recourse to preaching and the means of grace provided by the Church and insisted greatly on the call for faith and good works. Above all, they gave a speaking proof of their faith by their works and by the inspiring example of heroic sanctity.

3. Melanchthon under the Double Burden, of Luther's Personality and his own Life's Work

The personality of Luther counts for much among the trials which embittered Melanchthon's life.

The passages already quoted witnessing thereto[2] must here be supplemented by what he himself says of his experiences at Luther's side, in a letter he wrote in 1548 to the councillor Carlowitz and the Court of Saxony. There was some doubt as to what attitude Melanchthon would adopt towards Maurice of Saxony, the new sovereign, the victor of the Schmalkalden War, and to his demands in the matter of religion.

In the letter, which to say the least is very conciliatory, Melanchthon says that he will know how to keep silence on any ecclesiastical regulations, no matter how distasteful to him they may be: for he knew what it was "to endure even a truly ignominious bondage, Luther having frequently given the rein to his own natural disposition, which was not a little quarrelsome, instead of showing due consideration for his own position and the general welfare." He goes on to explain the nature of the

[1] See above, p. 226. [2] Above, vol. iii., p. 362 ff.

habit of silence he had so thoroughly mastered; it meant no sacrifice of his own doctrine and views ("*non mutato genere doctrinæ*"). For twenty long years, so he complains, he had been obliged to bear the reproaches of the zealots of the party because he had toned down certain doctrines and had ventured to differ from Luther; they had called him ice and frost, accused him of being in league with the Papists, nay, of being ambitious to secure a Cardinal's hat. Yet he had never had the slightest inclination to go over to the Catholics, for they "were guilty of cruel injustice." He must, however, say that he, who by nature was a lover of peace and the quiet of the study, had only been drawn into the movement of which Luther was the leader because he, like many wise and learned contemporaries, thought he discerned in it a striving after that truth for which he thirsted and for which he lived. Luther it was true, had, from the very first, introduced a "rougher element into the cause"; he himself, however, had made it his aim to set up only what was true and essentially necessary; he had also done much in the way of reforms, and, to boot, had waged a war against the demagogues ("*multa tribunitia plebs*") which, owing to the attacks of enemies at Court, had drawn down on him the displeasure of the sovereign and had even put his life in jeopardy.

Coming finally to speak of the concessions, speculative and practical, which he was prepared to make in addition to preserving silence, he mentions "the authority to be conceded to the bishops and the chief bishop in accordance with the Augsburg Confession." He adds: "Mayhap I am by nature of a servile turn of mind" ("*fortassis sum ingenio servili*"), but, after all there is a real call to be humble and open to advances. He also refers to the defeat of the Evangelical Princes, but only to assure Carlowitz that he attributes this, "not to blind fate, but rather admit that we have drawn down the chastisement on ourselves by many and great misdeeds."[1]

This is the oft-quoted declaration which Protestant writers as a whole regret more on Melanchthon's than on Luther's account. It was "an unhappy hour" in which Melanchthon wrote the letter "which gives us so profound an insight into his soul";[2] he forgot that he was "a public character"; "in this letter not only what he says of Luther and of his relations with him, but even his account of the share he himself took in the Reformation," "is scarcely to his credit."[3]

Another Protestant holds, however, a different view. In this letter we have, as a matter of fact, "the expression of feelings which for long years Melanchthon had most carefully kept under restraint locked up in his heart. . . . From it we may judge how great was the vexation and bitterness Melanchthon had to

[1] April 28, 1548, "Corp. ref.," 6, p. 879 *sqq.*

[2] G. Kawerau, "Luthers Stellung zu den Zeitgenossen Erasmus, Zwingli und Melanchthon" (Reprint from "Deutsch-evang. Bl.," 1906, 1–3), p. 30.

[3] F. Loofs, "DG.," 4, 1906, p. 866, n. 3.

endure. . . . In an unguarded moment what had been so long pent up broke out with elemental force." The historian we are quoting then goes on to plead for a "milder sentence," especially as "almost every statement which occurs in the letter can be confirmed from Melanchthon's confidential correspondence of the previous twenty years."[1]

Some of Melanchthon's Deliverances

It is quite true, that, in his confidential correspondence, Melanchthon had long before made allusions to the awkwardness of his position.

He says, for instance, in a letter to the famous physician Leonard Fuchs, who wanted him to take up his abode at Tübingen: "Some Fate has, as it were, bound me fast against my will, like hapless Prometheus," bound to the Caucasian rock, of whom the classic myth speaks. Nevertheless, he had not lost hope of sometime cutting himself free; happy indeed would he account himself could he find a quiet home amongst his friends at Tübingen where he might devote his last years to study.[2]

On a later occasion, when bewailing his lot, the image of Prometheus again obtrudes itself on the scholar.[3]

Melanchthon's uneasiness and discontent with his position did not merely arise from the mental oppression he experienced at Luther's side; it was, as already pointed out, in part due to sundry other factors, such as the persecution he endured from disputatious theologians within the party, the sight of the growing confusion which met his eye day by day, the public dangers and the moral results of the religious upheaval, and, lastly, the depressing sense of being out of the element where his learning and humanistic tastes might have found full and unhampered scope. His complaints dwell, now on one, now on some other of these trials, but, taken together, they combine to make up a tragic historical picture of a soul distraught; this is all the more surprising, since, owing to the large share he had in the introduction of the new Evangel, the cheering side of the

[1] G. Ellinger, "Melanchthon," 1902, p. 535 f.

[2] Nov. 12, 1538, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 606.

[3] To Gelous, May 20, 1559, *ib.*, 9, p. 822: "*Pendeo velut ad Caucasum adfixus, etsi verius sum ἐπιμηθεύς quam προμηθεύς et laceror, non ut ille vulturibus tantum, sed etiam a cuculis.*"

great religious reform should surely have been reflected in Melanchthon.

"It is not fitting," writes the Protestant theologian Carl Sell, "to throw a veil over the sad close of Melanchthon's life, for it was but the logical consequence of his own train of thought." Luther's theology, of the defects of which Melanchthon was acutely conscious, had, according to Sell, "already begun to break down as an adequate theory of life";[1] of the forthcoming disintegration Luther's colleague already had a premonition.

In Aug., 1536, when Melanchthon paid a visit to his home and also to Tübingen, he became more closely acquainted with the state of the Protestant Churches, both in the Palatinate and in Swabia. It was at that time that he wrote to his friend Myconius: "Had you travelled with us and seen the woeful devastation of the Churches in many localities you would undoubtedly long, with tears and groans, for the Princes and the learned to take steps for the welfare of the Churches. At Nuremberg the good attendance at public worship and the orderly arrangement of the ceremonies pleased me greatly; elsewhere, however, lack of order and general barbarism is wonderfully estranging the people [from religion; '*ἀταξία et barbaries mirum in modum alienat animos*']. Oh, that the authorities would see to the remedying of this evil!"[2]

After he had reluctantly resumed the burden of his Wittenberg office he continued to fret about the dissensions in his own camp. "Look," he wrote to Veit Dietrich in 1537, "how great is the danger to which the Churches are everywhere exposed and how difficult it is to govern them, when those in authority are at grips with one another and set up strife and confusion, whereas it is from them that we should look for help. . . . What we have to endure is worse than all the trials of Odysseus the sufferer."[3]

In the following year he told the same friend the real evil was, that "we live like gipsies, no one being willing to obey another in any single thing."[4]

In the name of Wittenberg University he wrote to Mohr, the Naumburg preacher, who was quarrelling with his brethren in the ministry, "What is to happen in future if, for so trivial a matter, such wild and angry broils break out amongst those who govern the Church?"[5]

The growing tendency to strife he describes in 1544 in these words: "There are at present many people whose quarrels are

[1] C. Sell, "Philipp Melanchthon und die deutsche Reformation bis 1531" ("Schriften des Vereins f. RG.," 14, 3, 1897), p. 117.

[2] Nov. 13, 1536, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 187.

[3] Dec. 7, 1537, *ib.*, p. 460.

[4] Feb. 13, 1538, *ib.*, p. 488.

[5] June 24, 1545, *ib.*, 5, p. 776: "*tam atrocia certamina inter collegas.*"

both countless and endless, and who everywhere find a pretext for them."[1]

Many of his complaints concerning the morals of the time, as Döllinger remarks, sound very much like those of a "sworn Catholic criticising the state of affairs brought about by the Reformation." Döllinger also calls attention to the saying of 1537: "The only glory remaining in this iron age is that of boldly breaking down the barriers of discipline ('*audacter dissipare vincula disciplinæ*') and of propounding to the people new opinions neatly cut and coloured."[2] A similar dictum dates from 1538. "Our age, as you can see, is full of malice and madness, and more addicted to intrigue than any previous one. The man who is most shameless in his abuse is regarded as the best orator. Oh, that God would change this!"[3] The growing evils made him more and more downhearted. "People have become barbarians," he exclaims twelve years later to his friend Camerarius, "and, accustomed as they are to hatred and contempt of law and order, fear lest any restraint be put on their licentiousness ('*metuunt frenari licentiam*'). These are the evils decreed for the last age of the world."[4]

Over and over again we can see how the timorous man endeavours to clear the religious innovations of any responsibility for the prevalent lawlessness, which, as he says, deserved to be bewailed with floods of tears; after all, the true Church *had* been revived; this edifice, this temple of God, still remained amidst all the chaos; even in Noe's day it had been exposed to damage.[5] At times, though less frequently than Luther, he lays all the blame on Satan; the latter, by means of the scandals, was seeking to scare people away from the true Evangel now brought to light, and to vex the preachers into holding their tongues.

Pessimistic consideration of the "last age of the world" was quite in his line; the dark though not altogether unfriendly shadow of the approaching end of all was discernible in the moral disorders, in the unbelief and anti-christian spirit of the foe. He would not dwell, so he once said, on the state of things among the people towards whom he was willing to be indulgent, but it could not be gainsaid that, "among the learned open contempt for religion was on the increase; they lean either towards the Epicureans or towards universal scepticism. Forgetfulness of God, the wickedness of the times, the senseless fury of the Princes, all unite in proving that the world lies in the pains of travail and that the joyous coming of Christ is nigh."[6] It was his hopelessness and the great solace he derived from the approaching end of all things that called forth this frame of mind. It is

[1] Dec. 25, 1544, to Camerarius, "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 554.
[2] "Die Reformation," 1, p. 376.
[3] Oct. 11, 1538, to Caspar Borner, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 596.
[4] April 30, 1550, *ib.*, 7, p. 580.
[5] Cp. Döllinger, *ib.*, 1, p. 379 f.
[6] From a New-Year's letter (Jan. 1, 1540) to Veit Dietrich, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 895.

also plain that he saw no prospect of improvement. "In these last days," he says, even a zealous preacher can no longer hope for success, though this does not give him the right to quit his post.[1] The poetic reference to the frenzied old age of the world ("*delira mundi senecta*") is several times met with in his letters.

In 1537 he grumbled to Johann Brenz, the preacher, of the hostility of the theologians, especially of the Luther-zealots; he had seen what hatred the mitigations he had introduced in Luther's doctrines had excited. "I conceal everything beneath the cloak of my moderation, but what shall I do eventually faced by the rage of so many ('*in tanta rabie multorum*')?"[2] "I seek for a creephole," he continues, "may God but show me one, for I am worn out with illness, old age and sorrow."

Of Amsdorf he learnt with pain that he had warned Luther against him as a serpent whom he was warming in his bosom.[3]

Andreas Osiander likewise wrote of Melanchthon to Besold at Nuremberg, that, since Apostolic times, no more mischievous and pernicious man had lived in the Church, so skilful was he in giving to his writings the semblance of wholesome doctrine while all the time denying its truth. "I believe that Philip and those who think like him are nothing but slaves of Satan." On another occasion the same bitter opponent of Melanchthon inveighs against the religious despotism which now replaced at Wittenberg the former Papal authority, a new tyranny which required, that "all disputes should be submitted to the elders of the Church."[4]—It was men such as these who repaid him for the labours he had reluctantly undertaken on behalf of the Church. Of their bitter opposition he wrote, that, even were he to shed as many tears as there was water in the flooded Elbe, he would still not be able to weep away his grief.[5]

[1] Sept. 9, 1541, to Veit Dietrich, *ib.*, 4, p. 654, where he continues: "*Tegere hæc soleo, sed, mihi crede, manent cicatrices.*"

[2] About July 16, 1537, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 390 *sq.* Before this he had said in humanistic style: "*Video novum quoddam genus sophistarum nasci; velut ex gigantum sanguine alii gigantes nati sunt. . . . Metuo maiores ecclesiæ motus. Hic cum hydra decerto. Uno represso alii multi exoriuntur.*"

[3] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 503 *sqq.* Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 451.

[4] Cp. "RE. f. prot. Th.," 3, Art. "Melanchthon," p. 523.

[5] Cp. Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 394.

Melanchthon's Strictures on Luther. His "Bondage"

If we consider more closely Melanchthon's relations with Luther we find him, even during Luther's lifetime, indignantly describing the latter's attacks on man's free-will as "*stoica et manichæa deliria*"; he himself, he declares, in spite of Luther's views to the contrary, had always insisted that man, even before regeneration, is able by virtue of his free-will to observe outward discipline and, that, in regeneration, free-will follows on grace and thereafter receives from on High help for doing what is good. Later, after Luther's death, he declared, with regard to this denial of free-will which shocked him, that it was quite true that "Luther and others had written that all works, good and bad, were inevitably decreed to be performed of all men, good and bad alike; but it is plain that this is against God's Word, subversive of all discipline and a blasphemy against God."[1]

In a letter of 1535 to Johann Sturm he finds fault with the harshness of Luther's doctrine and with his manner of defending it, though, from motives of caution, he refrains from mentioning Luther by name. He himself, however, was looked upon at the Court of the Elector as "less violent and stubborn than some others"; it was just because they fancied him useful as a sort of valve, as they called it, that they refused to release him from his professorial chair at Wittenberg. And such is really the case. "I never think it right to quarrel unless about something of great importance and quite essential. To support every theory and extravagant opinion that takes the field has never been my way. Would that the learned were permitted to speak out more freely on matters of importance!" But, instead of this, people ran after their own fancies. There was no doubt that, at times, even some of their own acted without forethought. "On account of my moderation I am in great danger from our own people . . . and it seems to me that the fate of Theramenes awaits me."[2] Theramenes had perished on the scaffold in a good cause—but before this had been guilty of grievous infidelity and was a disreputable intriguer. Of this Melanchthon can scarcely have been aware, otherwise he would surely have chosen some less invidious term of comparison. He was happier in his selection when, in 1544, he compared himself to Aristides on account of the risk he ran of being sent into exile by Luther: "Soon you will hear that I have been sent away from here as Aristides was from Athens."[3]

[1] On March 9, 1559, to the Elector August of Saxony, "Corp. ref.," 9, p. 766 *sq.* Cp. "RE.," *ib.*, p. 525.

[2] As early as Aug. 28, 1535, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 917.

[3] Sep. 8, 1544, to Peter Medmann, *ib.*, 5, p. 478.

Especially after 1538, i.e. during the last eight years of Luther's life, Melanchthon's stay at Wittenberg was rendered exceedingly unpleasant. In 1538 he reminds Veit Dietrich of the state of bondage (δουλότης) of which the latter had gleaned some acquaintance while in Wittenberg (1522–35); "and yet," he continues, "Luther has since become much worse."[1] In later letters he likens Luther to the demagogue Cleon and to boisterous Hercules.[2]

Although it was no easy task for Luther, whose irritability increased with advancing years, to conceal his annoyance with his friend for presuming to differ from him, yet, as we know, he never allowed matters to come to an open breach. Melanchthon, too, owing to his fears and pusillanimity, avoided any definite personal explanation. Both alike were apprehensive of the scandal of an open rupture and its pernicious effects on the common cause. Moreover, Luther was thoroughly convinced that Melanchthon's services were indispensable to him, particularly in view of the gloomy outlook for the future.

The matter, however, deserves further examination in view of the straightforwardness, clearness and inexorableness which Luther is usually supposed to have displayed in his doctrines.

When important interests connected with his position seemed to call for it, Luther could be surprisingly lenient in questions of doctrine. Thus, for instance, we can hardly recognise the once so rigid Luther in the Concord signed with the Zwinglians, and again, when, for a while, the English seemed to be dallying with Lutheranism. In the case of the Zwinglian townships of South Germany, which were received into the Union by the Wittenberg Concord the better to strengthen the position of Lutheranism against the Emperor, Luther finally, albeit grudgingly, gave his assent to theological articles which differed so widely from his own doctrines that the utmost skill was required to conceal the discrepancy.[3] As for the English, Kolde says: "How far Luther was prepared to go [in allowing matters to take their course] we see, e.g. from the fact that, in his letter of March 28, 1536, to the Elector, he describes the draft Articles of agreement with the English—only recently

[1] Oct. 6, 1538, *ib.*, 3, p. 594.
[2] See Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 354, and 3, p. 270.
[3] See above, vol. iii., p. 421 f.

made public and which (apart from Art. 10, which might at a pinch be taken in the Roman sense) are altogether on the lines of the '*Variata*'—as quite in harmony with our own teaching."[1] The terms of this agreement were drawn up by Melanchthon. As a matter of fact "we find little trace of Luther's spirit in the Articles. We have simply to compare [Luther's] Schmalkalden Articles of the following year to be convinced how greatly Luther's own mode of thought and expression differed from those Articles." "They show us what concessions the Wittenberg theologians, as a body, were disposed to make in order to win over such a country as England."[2]

Concerning Luther's attitude towards the alterations made by Melanchthon in the Confession of Augsburg (above, vol. iii., p. 445 f.) we must also assume "from his whole behaviour, that he was not at all pleased with Melanchthon's action; yet he allowed it, like much else, to pass."[3] This, however, does not exclude Luther's violence and

[1] Kolde in the Preface to the "Symbol. Bücher," [10], p. xxvi., No. 3. The Articles of Agreement were published in full by G. Mentz in 1905, "Die Wittenberger Artikel von 1536" ("Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Prot.," Hft. 2). Letter to the Elector, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 128; "Briefe," 4, p. 683 ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 315, where Enders, as late as 1903, had to admit: "The doctrinal articles herewith transmitted are not known"). On the negotiations with the English, see vol. iv., p. 10 f.

[2] Thus Mentz, the editor, p. 11. Some theses from these Articles of Agreement proposed by the Wittenbergers but not accepted by the English deserve to be quoted from the new sources; their divergence from Luther's ordinary teaching is self-evident. Of good works: "*Bona opera non sunt precium pro vita æterna, tamen sunt necessaria ad salutem, quia sunt debitum, quod necessario reconciliationem sequi debet.*" In support of this Mt. xix. 17 is quoted: "*Si vis ad vitam ingredi serva mandata.*" Again: "*Docemus requiri opera a Deo mandata et quidem non tantum externa civilia opera, sed etiam spirituales motus, timorem Dei, fiduciam,*" etc. (p. 34).—"*Hæc obedientia in reconciliatis fide iam reputatur esse iustitia et quædam legis impletio*" (p. 40).—"*Docendæ sunt ecclesiæ de necessitate et de dignitate huius obedientiæ, videlicet quod . . . hæc obedientia seu iusticia bonæ conscientiæ sit necessaria quia debitum est, quod necessario sequi reconciliationem debet*" (p. 42).—Merit, at least in a certain restricted sense, is also admitted: "*Ad hæc bona opera sunt meritoria iuxta illud* (1 Cor. iii. 8): *Unusquisque accipiet mercedem iuxta proprium laborem.*" (Cp. the Apologia of the Confession of Augsburg, "Symb. Bücher," pp. 120, 148.) "*Etsi enim conscientia non potest statuere, quod propter dignitatem operum detur vita æterna, sed nascimur filii Dei et hæredes per misericordiam* (which is also the Catholic teaching) *tamen hæc opera in filiis merentur præmia corporalia et spiritualia et gradus præmiorum,*" etc. (p. 46). The ambiguity concerning Christ's Presence in the Eucharist (p. 62) is due to Melanchthon, not to Luther.

[3] Kolde, *ib.*

narrowness having caused an estrangement between them, Melanchthon having daily to apprehend outbursts of anger, so that his stay became extremely painful. The most critical time was in the summer of 1544, in consequence of the Cologne Book of Reform (vol. iii., p. 447). Luther, who strongly suspected Melanchthon's orthodoxy on the Supper, prepared to assail anew those who denied the Real Presence. Yet the storm which Melanchthon dreaded did not touch him; Luther's "Kurtz Bekentnis vom heiligen Sacrament," which appeared at the end of September, failed to mention Melanchthon's name. On Oct. 7, Cruciger was able by letter to inform Dietrich, that the author no longer displayed any irritation against his old friend.[1] Here again considerations of expediency had prevailed over dogmatic scruples, nor is there any doubt that the old feeling of friendship, familiarity and real esteem asserted its rights, We may recall the kindly sympathy and care that Luther lavished on Melanchthon when the latter fell sick at Weimar, owing to the trouble consequent on his sanction given to the Hessian bigamy.[2]

Indeed we must assume that the relations between the two were often more cordial than would appear from the letters of one so timid and fainthearted as Melanchthon; the very adaptability of the latter's character renders this probable. In Nov., 1544, Chancellor Brück declared: "With regard to Philip, as far as I can see, he and Martin are quite close friends"; in another letter written about that time he also says Luther had told him that he was quite unaware of any differences between himself and Melanchthon.[3]

The latter, whenever he was at Wittenberg, also continued as a rule to put in an appearance at Luther's table, and there is little doubt that, on such occasions, Luther's frank and open conversation often availed to banish any ill-feeling there may have been. We learn that Magister Philip was

[1] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 497.

[2] To Melanchthon, June 18, 1540, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 293; "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 91; "Ratzebergers Gesch.," p. 102 ff.; "Corp. ref.," 3, pp. 1060 *sq.*, 1077, 1081. To Johann Lang, July 2, 1540, "Briefe," *ib.*, p. 297; "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 109: "*mortuum enim invenimus; miraculo Dei manifesto vivit.*" See vol. iii., p. 162.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 689; "Anal. Luth.," ed. Kolde, p. 402; "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 522.

present at the dinner in celebration of Luther's birthday in 1544, together with Cruciger, Bugenhagen, Jonas and Major, and that they exchanged confidences concerning the present and future welfare of the new religion.[1]

When Melanchthon was away from Wittenberg engaged in settling ecclesiastical matters elsewhere he was careful to keep Luther fully informed of the course of affairs. He occasionally expressed his thanks to the latter for the charity and kindness of his replies; Luther in his turn kept him posted in the little intimacies of their respective families, in the occurrences in the town and University of Wittenberg, and almost always added a request for prayer for help in his struggles with "Satan." This intimate correspondence was carried on until the very month before Luther's death. Even in his last letters Luther calls the friend with whom he had worked for so many years "My Philip"; Melanchthon, as a rule, heads his communications in more formal style: "*Clarissimo et optimo viro D. Martino Luthero, doctori theologiæ, instauratori puræ evangelicæ doctrinæ ac patri suo in Christo reverendo et charissimo.*"[2]

The great praise which Melanchthon bestows on the deceased immediately after his death is indeed startling, but we must beware of regarding it as mere hypocrisy.

The news of Luther's death which took place at Eisleben on Feb. 14, 1546, was received by Melanchthon the very next day. In spite of all their differences it must have come as a shock to him, the more so that the responsibility for the direction of his friend's work was now to devolve on him.

The panegyric on Luther which Melanchthon delivered at Wittenberg boldly places him on the same footing with Isaias, John the Baptist, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and Augustine of Hippo. In it the humanistic element and style is more noticeable than the common feeling of the friend. He hints discreetly at the "great vehemence" of the departed, but does not omit to mention that everyone who was acquainted with him must bear witness that he had always shown himself kind-hearted towards his friends, and never obstinate or quarrelsome.[3] Though this is undoubtedly at variance with what he says elsewhere, still such a thing was expected in those days in panegyrics on great men, nor would so smooth-tongued an orator have felt any scruple about it. In his previous announcement of Luther's death to

[1] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 524.

[2] Cp., for instance, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, pp. 106, 116, 123, etc.; 13, pp. 282, 318.

[3] Discourse of Feb. 22, 1546, "Corp. ref.," 11, p. 726 *sqq.*

the students he had exclaimed: "The chariot of Israel and the driver thereof have been taken from us, the man who ruled the Church in these days of the world's senile decay."[1]

Melanchthon's Last Years

After Luther's death Melanchthon had still to endure fourteen years of suffering, perhaps of even more bitter character than he had yet tasted. Whilst representing Lutheranism and taking the lead amongst his colleagues he did so with the deliberate intention of maintaining the new faith by accommodating himself indulgently to the varying conditions of the times. Our narrative may here be permitted to anticipate somewhat in order to give a clear and connected account of Melanchthon's inner life and ultimate fate.[2]

His half-heartedness and love of compromise were a cause of many hardships to him, particularly at the time of the so-called Interims of Augsburg and Leipzig. It was a question of introducing the Augsburg Interim into the Saxon Electorate after the latter, owing to the War of Schmalkalden, had come under the rule of the new Elector Maurice. Melanchthon had at first opposed the provisions of this Interim, by means of which the Emperor hoped gradually to bring the Protestants back to the fold. In Dec., 1548, however, he, together with other theologians, formally accepted the Leipzig articles, which, owing to their similarity with the Augsburg Interim, were dubbed by his opponents the "Leipzig Interim."[3] In this the "moot observances (Adiaphora), i.e. those which may be kept without any contravention of Divine Scripture," were extended by Melanchthon so as to include the reintroduction of fasting, festivals, not excluding even Corpus Christi, images of the Saints in the churches, the Latin liturgy, the Canonical Hours in Latin and even a sort of hierarchy. Melanchthon also agreed to the demand for the recognition of the seven sacraments. By strongly emphasising his own doctrine of synergism, he brought the Wittenberg teaching on Justification much nearer to Catholic dogma; he even dealt a death-blow to the genuine doctrine of Luther by appending his signature to the following proposition: "God does not deal with man as with a block of wood, but so draws him that his will also co-operates." In addition to this the true character of Luther's *sola fides*, or assurance of salvation, was veiled by Melanchthon under the formula: "True faith accepts, together with other articles, that of the 'Forgiveness of Sins.'"

Hence when Flacius Illyricus, Amsdorf, Gallus, Wigand, Westphal and others loudly protested against Melanchthon as though he had denied Luther's doctrine, they were not so very far wrong. The result of their vigorous opposition and of the number of those who sided with them was that Melanchthon gradually

[1] "Corp. ref.," 6, p. 59.
[2] For further details, see below, vol. vi., xl., 3.
[3] On what follows, see Loofs, "DG.," [4], p. 867 f.

ceased to be the head of the Lutheran Church, becoming merely the leader of a certain party.

Later on, in 1552, when the position of public affairs in Germany was more favourable to Protestantism, Melanchthon admitted that he had been wrong in his views concerning the Adiaphora, since, after all, they were not so unimportant as he had at first thought. In order to pacify his opponents he included the following proposition in his form of examination for new preachers: "We ought to profess, not the Papal errors, Interim, etc. . . . but to remain faithful to the pure Divine teaching of the Gospel."[1]

Opposition to the "Papal errors" was indeed the one thing to which he steadfastly adhered; this negative side of his attitude never varied, whatever changes may have taken place in his positive doctrines.

Nevertheless during the ensuing controversies he was regarded as a traitor by the stricter Lutherans and treated with a scorn that did much to embitter his last years. The attitude of his opponents was particularly noticeable at the conference of Worms in 1557. Even before this, they, particularly the Jena theologians, had planned an outspoken condemnation of all those who "had departed from the Augsburg Confession," as Melanchthon had done. They now appeared at Worms with others of the same way of thinking. "I desire no fellowship with those who defile the purity of our doctrine," wrote one of them; "we must shun them, according to the words of the Bible: 'If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house nor say to him, God speed you.'"[2] The friends of Flacius Illyricus at the very first meeting made no secret of their unanimous demand, so that Melanchthon in his justificatory statement could well say: "I see plainly that all this is directed solely against me." He opposed any condemnation of Zwingli or of Calvin on account of their doctrine on the Supper; this, he said, was the business of a synod.

At the very outset of the disputations with the Catholics it became evident anew that the divergency of the Protestants in the interpretation of Holy Scripture was too great to allow of the points under discussion being satisfactorily settled in conference; the abrogation of an ecclesiastical authority for the exposition of Scripture had resulted in an ever-growing want of unity in the interpretation of the Bible. Peter Canisius, the Catholic spokesman, pointed out emphatically what obstacles were presented by the contradictory opinions on doctrine amongst the Protestants; where every man traced his opinions back to Scripture, how was it possible to arrive at any decision?[3] It was from Canisius, "who during the course of the conference distinguished himself as the leader of the Catholic party and later repeatedly proved

[1] Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 554.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 569.

[3] Cp. the report of Peter Canisius to Lainez, General of the Jesuits, Braunsberger, "Epistulæ b. Petri Canisii," 2, p. 176 *sq.*

himself a sharp observer of the religious conditions in Germany,"[1] that the suggestion came, that the Protestants should define their position more clearly by repudiating certain divergent sects. This led the followers of Flacius to demand that all the Evangelicals should unite in condemning Zwinglianism, Osianderism, Adiaphorism and Majorism, and also Calvin's doctrine on the Supper. To this Melanchthon and his friends absolutely refused to agree. The result was that the followers of Flacius departed greatly incensed, and the conference had to be broken off. "The contradictions in the very heart of Protestantism were thus revealed to the whole world."[2]

"No greater disgrace befell the Reformation in the 16th century."[3]

From that time Melanchthon was a broken man. His friend Languet wrote to Calvin, "Mr. Philip is so worn out with old age, toils, calumnies and intrigues that nothing is left of his former cheerfulness."[4]

Melanchthon characterised the Book of Confutation published by the Duke of Saxony in 1558, and finally revised by Flacius, as a "congeries of sophisms" which he had perused with great pain, and as "venomous sophistry." He therefore once more begged for his dismissal.[5]

His longing for death as a happy release from such bitter affliction we find expressed in many of his letters. To Sigismund Gelous of Eperies in Hungary he wrote, on May 20, 1559, that he was not averse to departing this life owing to the attacks on his person, and in order that he might behold "the light of the Heavenly Academy" and become partaker of its wisdom.[6] He looked forward, so he writes to another, to that light "where God is all in all and where there is no more sophistry or calumny."[7] Only a few days before his death he solaced himself by drawing up some notes entitled: "Reasons why you should fear death less." On the left of the sheet he wrote: "You will escape from sin, and will be delivered from all trouble and the fury of the theologians (*'liberaberis ab œrumnis et a rabie theologorum'*)"; and, on the right: "You will attain to the light, you will behold God, you will look on the Son of God, you will see into those

[1] Ellinger, *ib.*, p. 570. [2] *Ib.*, p. 571.

[3] Thus the Protestant theologian Nitzsch, see "RE. f. prot. Th.," [3], Art. "Melanchthon," p. 525. Loofs, [4], p.904. "The religious conference suffered shipwreck from want of unity amongst the Evangelicals." The Gnesio-Lutherans demanded (Sep. 27) that all errors on "the Supper" should be condemned, "whether emanating from Carlstadt, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Calvin or others." Calvin's doctrine was, however, substantially identical with Melanchthon's at that time.

[4] "RE.," *ib.*

[5] To Camerarius, Feb. 16, 1559, "Corp. ref.," 9, p. 744.

[6] *Ib.*, p. 822. As a Humanist he was fond of conjuring up heaven under the image of the Academy. In his address to the students on Luther's death he says, the former had been snatched away "*in œternam scholam et in œterna gaudia.*"

[7] To Buchholzer, Aug. 10, 1559, *ib.*, p. 898.

wonderful mysteries which you have been unable to comprehend in this life, such as why we are created as we are, and how the two natures are united in Christ."[1] He finally departed this life on April 19, 1560, from the results of a severe cold.

Review of Melanchthon's Religious Position as a whole

Melanchthon's last work was a "strong protest against Catholicism," which at the same time embodied an abstract of his whole doctrine—such as it had become during the later years of his life. This work he calls his "Confession"; it is professedly aimed at the "godless Articles of the Bavarian Inquisition," i.e. was intended to counteract the efforts of Duke Albert of Bavaria to preserve his country from the inroads of Protestantism.[2]

In this "Confession," dating from the evening of his days, the "so-peaceful" Melanchthon bluntly describes the Pope and all his train (*satellites*) as "defenders of idols"; according to him they "withstand the known truth, and cruelly rage against the pious."[3] This book, with its superficial humanistic theology, justifies, like so many of his earlier works, the opinion of learned Catholic contemporaries who regretted that the word of a scholar devoid of any sound theological training should exercise so much influence over the most far-reaching religious questions of the day.

Writing to Cardinal Sadoleto, Johann Fabri, Bishop of Vienna, says, "Would that Melanchthon had pursued his studies on the lines indicated by his teacher Capnion [Reuchlin]! Would that he had but remained content with the rhetoric and grammar of the ancients instead of allowing his youthful ardour to carry him away, to turn the true religion into a tragedy! But alas . . . when barely eighteen years of age he began to teach the simple, and, by his soft speeches, he has disturbed the whole Church beyond measure. And even after so many years he is still unable to see his error or to desist from the doctrines once imbibed and from furthering such lamentable disorders."[4] To this letter Fabri appended excerpts from various writings of Melanchthon's as "specimens of what his godless pen had produced against the truth and the peace of the Church."

Others, for instance Eck and Cochlæus, in their descriptions of Melanchthon dwell on the traits that displeased them in their personal intercourse with him.

[1] *Ib.*, p. 1098.

[2] Thus in his "Testament" of April 18, 1560, *ib.*, p. 1099.

[3] Reprinted in "Opera Ph. Melanchtonis," t. 1, Vitebergæ, 1562, p. 364 *sqq.*

[4] Jan. 28, 1538, "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 20, p. 247 ff. G. Kawerau, "Die Versuche Melanchthon zur kathol. Kirche zurückzuführen," 1902 ("Schriften des Vereins f. RG.," No. 73), p. 43.

Johann Eck compares the way in which Melanchthon twice outwitted Cardinal Campeggio to the false arts of Sinon the Greek, known to us from Virgil's account of the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy.[1] Johann Cochlæus, who had met him at Augsburg, calls him the "fox," and once warns a friend: "Take care lest he cheat you with his deceitful cunning, for, like the Sirens, he gains a hearing by sweet and honeyed words; he makes a hypocritical use of lying; he is ever planning how he may win men's hearts by all manner of wiles, and seduces them with dishonest words."[2] About the same time in a printed reply to Melanchthon's "Apologia," he drew an alarming picture of the latter's trickery at the Diet of Augsburg. By worming himself into the confidence of the Princes and great men present, Melanchthon learned, so he says, things that were little to the credit of the Catholic Church; these he afterwards retailed to Luther, who at once, after duly embellishing them, flung the tales broadcast amongst the people by means of the press. Melanchthon made not the slightest attempt to correct his statements, as he was in duty bound to do, and his honeyed words merely fed the flames.[3] "Most people," he writes elsewhere, "if not all, have hitherto supposed Melanchthon to be much milder and more moderate than Luther"; such persons should, however, study his writings carefully, and then they would soon see how unspeakably bitter was his feeling against Catholics.[4]

The latter assertion is only too fully confirmed by the extracts already put before the reader, particularly by those from his Schmalkalden tract on the Pope, from his Introduction to the new edition of Luther's "Warnunge" and from the "Confession" just alluded to.[5] Here there glows such deep hatred of the faith and practices of the Catholic Church that one seeks in vain for the common ground on which his professed love for union could thrive.

His conciliatory proposals were, however, in fact nothing more than the vague and barren cravings of a Humanist.

In connection with this a characteristic, already pointed out, which runs through the whole of Melanchthon's religious attitude and strongly differentiates him from Luther, merits being emphasised anew. This is the shallow, numbing spirit which penetrates alike his theology and his philosophy, and the humanistic tendency to reduce everything to uniformity. That, in his theological vocabulary he

[1] To Vergerio, June 1, 1534, "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 19, p. 222. Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 79.

[2] To Bishop Cricius, June 2, 1534, in his "Velitatio in Apologiam Ph. Melanchthonis," 1534, Bl. A. 6 ff. Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 23 f.

[3] "Velitatio," Bl. A. 4. Kawerau, p. 25.

[4] "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 18, p. 424. Kawerau, p. 64 f.

[5] Vol. ii., p. 438 ff., and above, p. 266. Cp. vol. iii., p. 447 (Cologne Book of Reform).

is fond of using classical terms (speaking, for instance, of the heavenly "Academy" where we attend the "school" of the Apostles and Prophets)[1] is a detail; he goes much further and makes suspiciously free with the whole contents of the faith, whether for the sake of reducing it to system, or for convenience, or in order to promote peace.[2] It would have fared ill with Melanchthon had he applied to himself in earnest what Luther said of those who want to be wiser than God, who follow their crazy reason and seek to bring about an understanding between Christ and . . . the devil. But Melanchthon's character was pliant enough not to be unduly hurt by such words of Luther's. He was able, on the one hand, to regard Bucer and the Swiss as his close allies on the question of the Supper and, on the other, while all the time sticking fast to Luther, he could declare that on the whole he entirely agreed with the religious views of Erasmus, the very "antipodes of Luther." It was only his lack of any real religious depth which enabled him so to act. In a sketch of Erasmus which he composed for one of his pupils in 1557, he even makes the former, in spite of all his hostility to Luther, to share much the same way of thinking, a fact which draws from Kawerau the complaint: "So easy was it for Melanchthon to close his eyes to the doctrinal differences which existed even amongst the '*docti*.'"[3]

A similar lack of any just and clear appreciation of the great truths of the faith is also apparent in Melanchthon's letters to Erasmus, more particularly in the later ones. Here personal friendship and Humanist fellow-feeling vie with each other in explaining away in the most startling manner the religious differences.[4] Many elements of theology were dissolved by Melanchthon's subjective method of exegesis and by the system of philosophy he had built up from the classical authors, particularly from Cicero. Melanchthon's philosophy was quite unfitted to throw light

[1] Cp. above, p. 265, n. 6.

[2] The authors of the Article on Melanchthon in the "RE. f. prot. Th.," [3], say, p. 535: "A Humanist mode of thought forms the background of his theology"; Melanchthon strove for a kind of compromise between Christian truth and ancient philosophy.

[3] "Versuche," p. 83, with the above example taken from "Corp. ref.," 12, p. 269.

[4] Cp., for instance, the letter of May 12, 1536, to Erasmus, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 68 *sq.* Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 32.

on the doctrines of revelation. To him the two domains, of philosophy and theology, seemed, not only independent, but actually hostile to each other, a state of things absolutely unknown to the Middle Ages. If, as Melanchthon avers, reason is unable to prove the existence of God on philosophical grounds, then, by this very fact, the science of the supernatural loses every stay, nor is it possible any longer to defend revelation against unbelief.

It is the merest makeshift, when, like other of his Humanist contemporaries, Melanchthon seeks to base our knowledge of God's existence on feeling and on a vague inward experience.[1]

Thus we can quite understand how old-fashioned Protestantism, after having paid but little attention to Melanchthon either in the days of orthodox Lutheranism or of Pietism, began to have recourse to him with the advent of Rationalism. The orthodox had missed in him Luther's sparkling "strength of faith" and the courageous resolve to twit the "devil" within and without; the Pietists failed to discern in him the mysticism they extolled in Luther. Rationalists, on the other hand, found in him many kindred elements. Even of quite recent years Melanchthon has been hailed as the type of the easy-going theologian who seeks to bridge the chasm between believing and infidel Protestantism; at any rate, Melanchthon's positive belief was far more extensive than that of many of his would-be imitators.

Melanchthon Legends

The tale once current that, at the last, Melanchthon was a Lutheran only in name, is to-day rejected by all scholars, Protestant and Catholic.

Concerning the "honesty of his Protestantism" "no doubts" are raised by Protestant theologians, who call his teaching a "modification and a toning down" of that of Luther; nor can we conclude that "he was at all shaky in his convictions," even should the remarkable utterance about to be cited really emanate from him.[2] A Catholic historian of the highest standing agrees in saying of him: "Even though Luther's teaching may not have completely

[1] Cp. the Article quoted, p. 268, n. 2.
[2] *Ib.*, and pp. 532, 537 of the "Realenzyklopädie."

satisfied Melanchthon, yet there is no reason to doubt, that, on the whole, he was heart and soul on the side of the innovations. . . . We may now and then come upon actions on his part which arouse a suspicion as to his straightforwardness, but on the whole his convictions cannot be questioned."[1]

In Catholic literature, nevertheless, even down to the present day, we often find Melanchthon quoted as having said to his mother, speaking of the relative value of the old and the new religion: "*Hæc plausibilior, illa securior;* Lutheranism is the more popular, but Catholicism is the safer."[2]

This story concerning Melanchthon assumed various forms as time went on. We must dismiss the version circulated by Florimond de Raemond in 1605, to the effect that the words had been spoken by Melanchthon on his death-bed to his mother who had remained a Catholic, when the latter adjured him to tell her the truth;[3] his mother, as a matter of fact, died at her home at Bretten in the Lower Palatinate long before her son, in 1529, slightly before July 24, being then in her fifty-third year.[4]

Nor is there much to be said in favour of another version of the above story which has it that Melanchthon's mother, after having been persuaded by him to come over, visited him in great distress of mind, and received from him the above reply.

Melanchthon called on her at Bretten in May, 1524, during his stay in his native place, and *may* have done so again in 1529 in the spring, when attending the Diet of Spires. A passage in his correspondence construed as referring to this visit is by no means clear,[5] though the illness and death of his mother would seem to make such a flying visit likely. On a third occasion Melanchthon went to Bretten in the autumn of 1536.

We shall first see what Protestant writers have to say of the supposed conversation with the mother.

K. Ed. Förstemann, who, in 1830,[6] dealt with the family records of the Schwarzerd family, says briefly of the matter: "Strobel was wrong in declaring this story to be utterly devoid of historical

[1] F. X. Funk in the "KL.," [2], Art. "Melanchthon," p. 1212 f.

[2] For a supposed remark of Luther's to Catherine Bora which would seem even more clearly to admit the uncertainty of the new faith, see below, p. 372 f.

[3] "L'Histoire de la naissance, progrez et decadence de l'hérésie de ce siècle," l. 2, ch. 9 (Rouen, 1648), p. 166: "On éscrit, qu'éstant sur le poinct de rendre l'âme, l'an 1560, sa mère," etc. The author is quite uncritical (see below, p. 271).

[4] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1083, Melanchthon to Camerarius. C. G. Strobel, "Melanchthoniana," 1771, p. 9.

[5] Cp. N. Müller, "Jakob Schwarzerd," 1908 ("Schriften des Vereins f. RG.," Nos. 96–97), p. 42, on "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 563. Müller assumes (p. 41) that the visit took place in 1524.

[6] "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1, 1830, p. 119 ff., "Die Schwarzerd."

foundation."[1] C. G. Strobel, in his "*Melanchthoniana*" (1771), had expressed his disbelief in the tale under the then widespread form, according to which Melanchthon had spoken the words, when visiting his dying mother in 1529; he had been much shocked to hear it told in rhetorical style by M. A. J. Bose of Wittenberg in a panegyric on Melanchthon. Bose, whose leanings were towards the Broad School, had cited the story approvingly as an instance of Melanchthon's large-mindedness in religion.[2] Against the account Strobel alleges several *a priori* objections of no great value; his best argument really was that there was no authority for it.

Förstemann's brief allusion was not without effect on the authors of the article on Melanchthon in the "Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie"; there we read: "The tale is at least not unlikely, though it cannot be proved with certainty";[3] even G. Ellinger, the latest of Melanchthon's biographers, declares: "We may assume that Melanchthon treated the religious views of his mother, who continued till the end of her life faithful to the olden Church, with the same tender solicitude as he displayed towards her in the later conversation in 1529."[4]

It is first of all necessary to settle whether the conversation actually rests on reliable authority. Förstemann, like Strobel, mentions only Melchior Adam (†1622), whose "*Vitæ theologorum*" was first published in 1615 (see next page).

Adam, a Protestant writer, gives no authority for his statement. Ægidius Albertinus, a popular Catholic author, writing slightly earlier, also gives the story in his "Rekreation" (see next page), published in 1612 and 1613, likewise without indicating its source.

Earlier than either we have Florimond de Raemond, whose "Histoire," etc. (above, p. 270, n. 3) contains the story even in the 1605 edition; he too gives no authority. So far no earlier mention of the story is known. It seems to have been a current tale in Catholic circles abroad and may have been printed. Strange to say the work of the zealous Catholic convert and polemic, de Raemond (completed and seen through the press by his son), contains the story under the least likely shape, the dying Melanchthon being made to address the words to his mother, who really had died long before.

It is quite likely that Ægidius Albertinus, the well-read priestly secretary to the Munich Council, who busied himself much with

[1] P. 122.

[2] In the collection of essays published by the Wittenberg "Academy," "Memoria Ph. Melanchthonis, finito post eius exitum sæculo II."

[3] 3rd ed., Art. "Melanchthon," p. 531.

[4] G. Ellinger, "Melanchthon," 1902, p. 191. F. X. Funk remarks in the "KL.," [2], Art. "Melanchthon," p. 1212: Melanchthon, "after having made her [his mother] repeat her prayers, is said to have assured her, that if she continued thus to believe and to pray, she might well live in hopes of being saved."

Italian, Spanish and Latin literature, was acquainted with this passage. He nevertheless altered the narrative, relating how Melanchthon's "aged mother came to him" after he had "lived long in the world and seen many things, and caused many scandals by his life." He translates as follows the Latin words supposed to have been uttered by Melanchthon: "The new religion is much pleasanter, but the old one is much safer."[1]

Next comes the Protestant Adam. The latter gives a plausible historical setting to the story by locating it during the time of Melanchthon's stay at Spires, though without mentioning that the mother was then at death's door. "When asked by her," so runs his account, which is the commonest one, "what she was to believe of the controversies, he listened to the prayers [she was in the habit of reciting] and, finding nothing superstitious in them, told her to continue to believe and to pray as heretofore and not be disturbed by the discussions and controversies."[2] Here we do not meet the sentence *Hæc plausibilior, illa securior.* The fact that Adam, who as a rule is careful to give his authorities, omits to do so here, points to the story having been verbally transmitted; for it is hardly likely that he, as a Protestant, would have taken over the statements of the two Catholic authorities Albertinus and Raemond, which were so favourable to Catholicism and so unfavourable to Protestantism. Probably, besides the Catholic version there was also a Protestant one, which would explain here the absence of the sentence ending with "*securior.*" Both may have risen at the time of the Diet of Spires, where Catholics and Protestants alike attended, supposing that the visit to Bretten took place at that time.

All things considered we may well accept the statement of the "Realenzyklopädie," that the story, as given by Adam, apart from the time it occurred, is "not unlikely, though it cannot be proved with certainty." Taking into account the circumstances and the character of Melanchthon, neither the incident nor his words involve any improbability. He will have seen that his beloved mother—whether then at the point of death or not—was in perfect good faith; he had no wish to plunge her into inward struggles and disquiet and preferred to leave her happy in her convictions; the more so since, in her presence and amid the recollections of the past, his mind will probably have travelled to the days of his youth, when he was still a faithful son of the Church. He had never forgotten the exhortation given by his father, nine days before his death, to his family "never to quit the Church's fold."[3] The exact date of the incident (1524 or 1529) must however remain doubtful. N. Müller in his work on Melanchthon's brother, Jakob Schwarzerd, says rightly: "No-

[1] "Des Teutschen . . . Rekreation," Munich, 1612, 4, p. 143. The author, who died in 1620, is no authority on historical matters beyond his own times and surroundings.

[2] "Vitæ theologorum," p. 333.

[3] "RE. f. prot. Th.," 3, Art. "Melanchthon," p. 531, with reference to Melanchthon's "Postille," 2, p. 477.

thing obliges us to place the conversation between Melanchthon and his mother—assuming it to be historical—in 1529, for it may equally well have taken place in 1524."[1]

Two unsupported stories connected with Melanchthon's Augsburg Confession must also be mentioned here. The twofold statement, frequently repeated down to the present day, takes the following shape in a recent historical work by a Protestant theologian: "When the Confession was read out, the Bishop of Augsburg, Christoph von Stadion, declared, 'What has just been read here is the pure, unvarnished truth'; Eck too had to admit to the Duke of Bavaria, that he might indeed be able to refute this work from the Fathers of the Church, but certainly not from Scripture." So convincing and triumphant was Melanchthon's attitude at the Diet of Augsburg.

The information concerning Stadion is found only in the late, Protestant history of the Diet of Augsburg written by George Cœlestinus and published in 1577 at Frankfurt; here moreover the story differs slightly, relating, that, during the negotiations on the Confession on Aug. 6, Stadion declared: "It was plain that those who inclined to the Lutheran views had, so far, not infringed or overthrown a single article of the faith by what they had put forward in defence of their views."[2] Any decisive advocacy of the Catholic cause was of course not to be expected from this bishop, in view of his general bearing. A good pupil of Erasmus, he had made the latter's reforming ideas his own. He was in favour of priestly marriage, and was inclined to think that Christ had not instituted auricular confession. There is, however, no proof that he went so far in the direction of the innovations as actually to approve the Lutheran teaching. It is true that the words quoted, even if really his, do not assert this; it was one thing to say that no article of the faith had been infringed by the Confession or by what had been urged in vindication of Lutheranism, and quite another to say that the Confession was nothing but the pure, unvarnished truth. At any rate, in the one form this statement of Stadion's is not vouched for by any other authority before Cœlestinus and, in the other, lacks any proof whatever. F. W. Schirrmacher, who relates the incident in his "Briefen und Akten zur Geschichte des Reichstags zu Augsburg" on the authority of Cœlestinus, admits that "its source is unknown."[3] Moreover an historian, who some years ago examined into Stadion's attitude at Augsburg, pointed out, that, in view of the further circum-

[1] Above, p. 270, n. 5, p. 41.
[2] "Historia comitiorum a. 1530 Augustæ celebratorum," 3, p. 20.
[3] Gotha, 1876, p. 191.

stances related by Cœlestinus, the story "sounds a little fabulous."[1] He tells us how on the same occasion the bishops of Salzburg and Augsburg fell foul of one another, the former, in his anger at Stadion's behaviour, even going so far as to charge the latter before the whole assembly with immorality in his private life. All this, told at great length and without mention of any authority, far from impressing us as historically accurate, appears at best as an exaggerated hearsay account of some incident of which the truth is no longer known.

As for what Johann Eck is stated to have said, viz. that he could refute Melanchthon's Confession from the Fathers but not from the Bible, no proof whatever of the statement is forthcoming. The oldest mention of it merely retails a piece of vague gossip, which may well have gone the rounds in Lutheran circles. It is met with in Spalatin's Notes and runs: "*It is said*" that Eck, referring to the whole doctrine of Melanchthon and Luther, told Duke William: "I would not mind undertaking to refute it from the Fathers, but not from Scripture."[2] It is true these notes go back as far as the Diet of Augsburg, but they notoriously contain much that is false or uncertain, and often record mere unauthenticated rumours. Neither Melanchthon nor Luther ever dared to appeal to such an admission on the part of their opponent, though it would certainly have been of the utmost advantage to them to have done so.

Not only is no proof alleged in support of the saying, but it is in utter contradiction with Eck's whole mode of procedure, which was always to attack the statements of his opponents, first with Scripture and then with the tradition of the Fathers. This is the case with the "*Confutatio confessionis*," etc., aimed at Melanchthon's Confession, in the preparation of which Eck had the largest share and which he presented at the Diet of Augsburg.

According to his own striking account of what happened at the religious conference of Ratisbon in 1541, it was to his habitual and triumphant use of biblical arguments against Melanchthon's theses that Eck appealed in the words he addressed to Bucer his chief opponent: "Hearken, you apostate, does not Eck use the language of the Bible and the Fathers? Why don't you reply to his writings on the primacy of Peter, on penance, on the Sacrifice of the Mass, and on Purgatory?" etc.[3]

What also weighs strongly against the tale is the fact that a charge of a quite similar nature had been brought against Eck ten years before the Diet of Augsburg by an opponent, who assailed him with false and malicious accusations. What Protestant fable came wantonly to connect with Melanchthon's "Confession" had already, in 1520, been charged against the Ingolstadt theologian by the author of "*Eccius dedolatus.*"

[1] J. B. Hablitzel, "Liter. Beil. zur Augsburger Poststng.," 1905, No. 40 f.

[2] Printed in the Jena edition of Luther's German works, 5, 1557, p. 41.

[3] "Apologia," Ingolstadii, 1542, p. clii.

There he is told, that, in his view, one had perforce (on account of the Bible) to agree with Luther secretly, though, publicly, he had to be opposed.[1]

Theodore Wiedemann, who wrote a Life of Eck and who at least hints at the objection just made, was justified in concluding with the query: "Is it not high time to say good-bye to this historic lie?"[2] When, as late as 1906, the story was once more burnished up by a writer of note, N. Paulus, writing in the "Historisches Jahrbuch," could well say: "Eck's alleged utterance was long ago proved to be quite unhistorical."[3]

4. Demonology and Demonomania

"Come O Lord Jesus, Amen! The breath of Thy mouth dismays the diabolical gainsayer." "Satan's hate is all too Satanic."[4]

Oh, that the devil's gaping jaws were crushed by the blessed seed of the woman![5] How little is left for God.[6] "The remainder is swallowed by Satan who is the Prince of this world, surely an inscrutable decree of Eternal Wisdom."[7] "Prodigies everywhere daily manifest the power of the devil!"[8]

Against such a devil's world, as Luther descried, what can help save the approaching "end of all"?

"The kingdom of God is being laid waste by Turk and Jew and Pope," the chosen tools of Satan; but "greater is He Who reigns in us than he who rules the world; the devil shall be under Christ to all eternity."[9] "The present rage of the devil only reveals God's future wrath against mankind, who are so ungrateful for the Evangel."[10] "We cannot but live in this devil's kingdom which surrounds us";[11] "but even with our last breath we must

[1] Willibald Pirkheimer, who was then on Luther's side, is usually regarded as the author of this screed published under the pseudonym of J. F. Cottalambergius. Like some others, K. Bauer ("Schriften des Vereins f. RG.," No. 100, 1910, p. 272) rejects his authorship. The passage in question appears in Böcking's edition, "Hutteni opp.," 4, 1860, p. 533.

[2] "Johannes Eck," 1865, p. 275 f. [3] 1906, p. 885.

[4] To Melanchthon, Dec. 7, 1540, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 227.

[5] To Melanchthon, Nov. 21, 1540, *ib.*, p. 215.

[6] To Link, Sep. 8, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 399.

[7] To Jonas, Jan. 23, 1542, *ib.*, p. 429.

[8] To Lauterbach, April 2, 1543, *ib.*, pp. 551, 552.

[9] To the Evangelical Brethren at Venice, June 13, 1543, *ib.*, p. 569.

[10] To Lauterbach, July 25, 1542, *ib.*, p. 487 f.

[11] To Cordatus, Dec. 3, 1544, *ib.*, p. 702.

fight against the monsters of Satan."[1] Let the Papists, whose glory is mere "devil's filth," rejoice in their successes.[2] As little heed is to be paid to them as to the preachers of the Evangel who have gone astray in doctrine, like Agricola and Schwenckfeld; they calmly "go their way to Satan to whom indeed they belong";[3] "they are senseless fools, possessed of the devil." The devil "spues and ructates" his writings through them; this is the devil of heresy against whom solemnly launch the malediction: "God's curse be upon thee, Satan! The spirit that summoned thee be with thee unto destruction!"[4]

Luther's letters during his later years are crammed with things of this sort.

The thought of the devil and his far-spread sphere of action, to which Luther had long been addicted, assumes in his mind as time goes on a more serious and gloomy shape, though he continues often enough to refer to the Divine protection promised against the powers of darkness and to the final victory of Christ.

In his wrong idea of the devil Luther was by no means without precursors. On the contrary, in the Middle Ages exaggerations had long prevailed on this subject, not only among the people but even among the best-known writers; on the very eve of Luther's coming forward they formed no small part of the disorders in the ecclesiastical life of the people. Had people been content with the sober teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Church on the action of the devil, the faithful would have been preserved from many errors. As it was, however, the vivid imagination of laity and clergy led them to read much into the revealed doctrine that was not really in it; witness, for instance, the startling details they found in the words of St. Paul (Eph. vi. 12): "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." Great abuses had gradually crept into

[1] To Probst, Jan. 17 (the year of his death), 1546, *ib.*, p. 778.

[2] To Jonas, Sep. 30, 1543, *ib.*, p. 591: "*quorum glorias pro stercore diaboli habeo.*"

[3] To Justus Menius, Jan. 10, 1542, "Briefe," 5, p. 426, on "Master Grickel," i.e. Agricola.

[4] To Caspar Schwenckfeld's messenger (1543), "Briefe," 5, p. 614: "*Increpet Dominus in te, Satan,*" etc.

the use of the blessings and exorcisms of the Church, more particularly in the case of supposed sorcery. Unfortunately, too, the beliefs and practices common among the people received much too ready support from persons of high standing in the Church. The supposition, which in itself had the sanction of tradition, that intercourse with the devil was possible, grew into the fantastic persuasion that witches were lurking everywhere, and required to have their malicious action checked by the authority of Church and State. That unfortunate book, "The Witches' Hammer," which Institoris and Sprenger published in 1487, made these delusions fashionable in circles which so far had been but little affected by them, though the authors' purpose, viz. to stamp out the witches, was not achieved.

It is clear that at home in Saxony, and in his own family, Luther had lived in an atmosphere where the belief in spirits and the harm wrought by the devil was very strong; miners are credited with being partial to such gloomy fancies owing to the nature of their dangerous work in the mysterious bowels of the earth. As a young monk he had fancied he heard the devil creating an uproar nightly in the convent, and the state of excitement in which he lived and which accompanied him ever afterwards was but little calculated to free him from the prejudices of the age concerning the devil's power. His earlier sermons, for instance those to be mentioned below on the Ten Commandments, contain much that is frankly superstitious, though this must be set down in great part to the beliefs already in vogue and above which he failed to rise. Had Luther really wished to play the part of a reformer of the ecclesiastical life of his day, he would have found here a wide field for useful labour. In point of fact, however, he only made bad worse. His lively descriptions and the weight of his authority merely served to strengthen the current delusions among those who looked to him. Before him no one had ever presented these things to the people with such attractive wealth of detail, no one had brought the weight of his personality so strongly to bear upon his readers and so urgently preached to them on how to deal with the spirits of evil.

Among non-Catholics it has been too usual to lay the whole blame on the Middle Ages and the later Catholic period. They do not realise how greatly Luther's influence

counted in the demonology and demonomania of the ensuing years. Yet Luther's views and practice show plainly enough, that it was not merely the Catholic ages before his day that were dishonoured with such delusions concerning the devil, and that it was not the Catholics alone, of his time and the following decades, who were responsible for the devil-craze and the bloody persecutions of the witches in those dark days of German history in the 17th century.[1]

The Mischief Wrought by the Devil

Luther's views agree in so far with the actual teaching of the olden Church, that he regards the devils as fallen angels condemned to eternal reprobation, who oppose the aims of God for the salvation of the world and the spiritual and temporal welfare of mankind. "The devil undoes the works of God," so he says, adding, however, in striking consonance with the teaching of the Church and to emphasise the devil's powerlessness, "but Christ undoes the devil's works; He, the seed [of the woman] and the serpent are ever at daggers drawn."[2] But Luther goes further, and depicts in glaring and extravagant colours the harm which the devil can bring about. He declares he himself had had a taste of how wrathful and mighty a foe the devil is; this he had learned in the inward warfare he was compelled to wage against Satan. He was convinced that, at the Wartburg, and also later, he had repeatedly to witness the sinister manifestations of the Evil One's malignant power.

Hence in his Church-postils, home-postils and Catechism, to mention only these, he gives full vent to his opinions on the hostility and might of Satan.

In the Larger Catechism of 1529,[3] "when enumerating the evils caused by the devil, he tells of how he "breaks many a man's neck, drives others out of their mind or drowns them in the water";[4] how he "stirs up strife and brings murder, sedition and war, *item* causes hail and tempests, destroying the corn and the cattle, and poisoning the air," etc.;[5] among those who break the

[1] Cp. for what follows N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrh.," 1910, where not only Luther's (pp. 20 ff., 48 ff.) but also the Zwinglians' and Calvinists' attitude to the matter is dealt with.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 305.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 123 ff.; Erl. ed., 21, p. 26 ff.; cp. p. 127=28 ff. [4] *Ib.*, p. 211=127. [5] *Ib.*, p. 205=121.

first commandment are all " who make a compact with the devil that he may give them enough money, help them in their love-affairs, preserve their cattle, bring back lost property, etc., likewise all sorcerers and magicians."[1]

In his home-postils he practically makes it one of the chief dogmas of the faith, that all temporal misfortune hails from the devil ; " the heathen " alone know this not ; " but do you learn to say : This is the work of the hateful devil." " The devil's bow is always bent and his musket always primed, and we are his target ; at us he aims, smiting us with pestilence, ' Franzosen ' [venereal disease], war, fire, hail and cloudburst." " It is also certain that wherever we be there too is a great crowd of demons who lie in wait for us, would gladly affright us, do us harm, and, were it possible, fall upon us with sword and long spear. Against these are pitted the holy angels who stand up in our defence."[2]

The devil, so he teaches in his Church-postils, a new edition of which he brought out in 1543 towards the end of his life, could either of himself or by the agency of others " raise storms, shoot people, lame and wither limbs, harrow children in the cradle, bewitch men's members, etc."[3] Thanks to him, " those who ply the magic art are able to give to things a shape other than their own, so that what in reality is a man looks like an ox or a cow ; they can make people to fall in love, or to bawd, and do many other devilish deeds."[4]

How accustomed he was to enlarge on this favourite subject in his addresses to the people is plain from a sermon delivered at the Coburg in 1530, which he sent to the press the following year : " The devil sends plagues, famines, worry and war, murder, etc. Whose fault is it that one man breaks a leg, another is drowned, and a third commits murder ? Surely the devil's alone. This we see with our own eyes and touch with our hands." " The Christian ought to know that he sits in the midst of demons and that the devil is closer to him than his coat or his shirt, nay, even than his skin, that he is all around us and that we must ever be at grips with him and fighting him." In these words there is already an echo of his fancied personal experiences, particularly of his inward struggles at the time of the dreaded Diet of Augsburg, to which he actually alludes in this sermon ; the subjective element comes out still more strongly when he proceeds in his half-jesting way : " The devil is more at home in Holy Scripture than Paris, Cologne and all the godless make-believes, however learned they may be. Whoever attempts to dispute with him will assuredly be pitched on the ash heap, and when it comes to a trial of strength, there too he wins the day ; in one hour he could do to death all the Turks, Emperors, Kings and

[1] *Ib.*, p. 134=36.

[2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 3^2, p. 477 f., in the first Sermon on the Angels.

[3] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 590 f. ; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 359. In the editions from 1522 to 1540 the word " conjugal " is inserted before " members."

[4] *Ib.*

Princes."[1] "Children should be taught at an early age to fear the dangers arising from the devil; they should be told: 'Darling, don't swear, etc.; the devil is close beside you, and if you do he may throw you into the water or bring down some other misfortune upon you.'"[2] It is true that he also says children must be taught that, by God's command, their guardian angel is ever ready to assist them against the devil; "God wills that he shall watch over you so that when the devil tries to cast you into the water or to affright you in your sleep, he may prevent him." Still one may fairly question the educational value of such a fear of the devil. Taking into account the pliant character of most children and their susceptibility to fear, Luther was hardly justified in expecting that: "If children are treated in this way from their youth they will grow up into fine men and women."

According to an odd-sounding utterance of Luther's, every bishop who attended the Diet of Augsburg brought as many devils to oppose him "as a dog has fleas on its back on Midsummer Day."[3] Had the devil succeeded in his attempt there, "the next thing would have been that he would have committed murder,"[4] but the angels dispatched by God had shielded him and the Evangel.

When a fire devastated that part of Wittenberg which lay beyond the Castle gate, Luther was quite overwhelmed; watching the conflagration he assured the people that, "it was the devil's work." With his eyes full of tears he besought them to "quench it with the help of God and His holy angels." A little later he exhorted the people in a sermon to withstand by prayer the work of the devil manifested in such fires. One of his pupils, Sebastian Fröschel, recalled the incident in a sermon on the feast of St. Michael. After the example and words of the "late Dr. Martin," he declares, "the devil's breath is so hot and poisonous that it can even infect the air and set it on fire, so that cities, land and people are poisoned and inflamed, for instance by the plague and other even more virulent diseases. . . . The devil is in and behind the flame which he fans to make it spread," etc.[5] This tallies with what Luther, when on a journey, wrote in later years to Catherine Bora of the fires which were occurring: "The devil himself has come forth possessed with new and worse demons; he causes fires and does damage that is dreadful to behold." The writer instances the forest fires then raging (in July) in Thuringia and at Werda, and concludes: "Tell them to pray against the troublesome Satan who is seeking us out."[6]

Madness, in Luther's view, is in every case due to the devil; "what is outside reason is simply Satanic."[7] In a long letter

[1] *Ib.*, 32, p. 112 ff. = 18^2, p. 64 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 120 = 76.
[3] *Ib.*, 34, 2, p. 263 f. = 19^2, p. 75. [4] *Ib.*, 32, p. 114 = 18^2, p. 68.
[5] "Drey Sermon, Von den Heiligen Engeln, Vom Teufel, Von der Menschen Seele," Witteberg, 1563. In the sermon "Vom Teufel." See N. Paulus, "Augsburger Poststng.," 1903, May 8.
[6] July 26, 1540, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 147.
[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 331.

to his friend Link, in 1528, dealing with a case raised, he proves that mad people must be regarded "as teased or possessed by the devil." "Medical men who are unversed in theology know not how great is the strength and power of the devil"; but, against their natural explanations, we can set, first, Holy Scripture (Luke xiii. 16; Acts x. 38); secondly, experience, which proves that the devil causes deafness, dumbness, lameness and fever; thirdly, the fact that he can even "fill men's minds with thoughts of adultery, murder, robbery and all other evil lusts"; all the more easily then was he able to confuse the mental powers.[1] In the case of those possessed, the devil, according to Luther, either usurps the place of the soul, or lives side by side with it, ruling such unhappy people as the soul does the body.[2]

Thus it is the devil alone who is at work in those who commit suicide, for the death a man fancies he inflicts on himself is nothing but the "devil's work";[3] the devil simply hoodwinks him and others who see him. To Frederick Myconius he wrote, in 1544: "It is my habit to esteem such a one as killed '*simpliciter et immediate*' by the devil, just as a traveller might be by highwaymen. . . . I think we must stick to the belief that the devil deceives such a man and makes him fancy that he is doing something quite different, for instance praying, or something of the sort."[4] In the same sense he wrote to Anton Lauterbach, in 1542, when the latter informed him of three men who had hanged themselves: "Satan, with God's leave, perpetrates such abominations in the midst of our congregation. . . . He is the prince of this world who in mockery deludes us into fancying that those men hanged themselves, whereas it was he who killed them By the images he brought before their mind, he made them think that they were killing themselves"—a statement at variance with the one last given.[5] Whereas in this letter he suggests that the people should be told of such cases from the pulpit so that they may not despise the "devil's power from a mistaken sense of security," previously, in conversation he had declared, that it ought not to be admitted publicly that such persons could not be damned not having been masters of themselves: "They do

[1] On July 14, 1528, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 299. Cp. Mathesius, *ib.*, p. 179: "Nothing is more certain than that the insane are not without their devils; these make them madder; the devil knows those who are of a melancholy turn, and of this tool he makes use." Thus Luther in 1540.

[2] "*Sic informat* [*diabolus*] *animam et corpus, ut obsessi nihil audiant, videant, sentiant; sed ipse est iis pro anima.*" Mathesius, *ib.*, p. 198 (in 1540). Cp. also "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 13, with reference to 1 Cor. v. 5. The passage occurs in the Table-Talk, ch. 24, No. 68. Cp. Erl. ed., vol. 59, p. 289 to vol. 60, p. 75. This chapter is followed by others on similar subjects. Demonology occupies altogether a very large place. Ch. 59, "On the Angels," comprises hardly four pages.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 326 (in 1543).

[4] Dec. 1, 1544, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 699 f.

[5] July 25, 1542: "*quum ipse occiderit eos et imaginatione animis impressa coegerit eos putare, quod se ipsos suspenderent.*"

not commit this wilfully, but are impelled to it by the devil. . . . But the people must not be told this."[1] Speaking of a woman who was sorely tempted and worried, he said to his friends, in 1543: "Even should she hang herself or drown herself through it, it can do her no harm; it is just as though it all happened in a dream." The source of this woman's distress was her low spirits and religious doubts.[2]

On all that the Devil is able to do

Many, in Luther's opinion, had been snatched off alive by the devil, particularly when they had made a compact or had dealings with him, or had given themselves up to him.

For instance, he had carried off Pfeifer of Mühlberg, not far from Erfurt, and also another man of the same name at Eisenach; indeed, the devil had fetched the latter away in spite of his being watched by the preacher Justus Menius and "many of his clergymen," and though "doors and windows had been shut so as to prevent his being carried away"; the devil, however, broke away some tiles "round the stove" and thus got in; finally he slew his victim "not far from the town in a hazel thicket."[3] Needless to say it is a great crime to bargain with the devil.[4] This Dr. Eck had done and likewise the Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg (†1535), who wanted to live another fifteen years; this, however, the devil did not allow.[5] Amsdorf too was dragged into the diabolical affair; one night at an inn two dead men appeared to him, thanks to some "Satanic art," and compelled him to draw up a document in writing and hand it over to Joachim. Two spirits assisted on the occasion, bearing candles.[6]

During battles the devil is able to carry men off more easily, but then the angels also kill by Divine command, as the Old Testament bears witness, for there "one angel could cause the death of many persons."[7] In war the devil is at work and makes use of the newest weapons "which indeed are Satan's own invention," for these cannon "send men flying into the air" and that

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 59. Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 198.

[2] Mathesius, *ib.* Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 127.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 24; cp. pp. 25, 27.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 269; "Aufzeichn.," p. 300.

[5] Mathesius, in both the passages quoted. Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 105 (1538): "*habuit fœdus cum Sathana ipse et pater eius, et fœdissima scortatione occubuit securissime.*"

[6] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 207, under the heading "*Spectra.*" In the same volume pp. 218–242 treat of the devil under the heading "*Diabolus, illius natura, conatus, insidiæ, figura, expulsio.*" In the second volume the ch. on "*tentationes,*" pp. 287–320, and, in the third, that on "*fascinationes et incantationes,*" pp. 9–14, are important.

[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 224 f. (1540).

" is the end of all man's strength."[1] It is also the devil who guides the sleep-walkers " so that they do everything as though wide awake," " but still there is something wanting and some defect apparent."[2]

Elsewhere too Luther discerns the work of the devil; for instance, when Satan sends a number of strange caterpillars into his garden,[3] pilfers things, hampers the cattle and damages the stalls[4] and interferes with the preparation of the cheese and milk.[5] " Every tree has its lurking demon.[6] You can see how, to your damage, Satan knocks down walls and palings that already totter ;[7] he also throws you down the stairs so as to make a cripple of you.[8]

In cases of illness it is the devil who enables the Jews to be so successful in effecting cures, more particularly in the case of the " great and those of high standing " ;[9] on the other hand he is also able maliciously to hinder the good effect of any medicine, as Luther himself had experienced when he lay sick in 1537. He can alter every medicine or medicament in the boxes, so that what has served its purpose well once or twice no longer works at all ; " so powerful is the devil."[10] Luther, as his pupils bear witness, had frequently maintained that many of his bodily ailments were inflicted on him solely by the devil's hatred.

Satan is a great foe of marriage and the blessing of children. " This is why you find he has so many malicious tricks and ways of frightening women who are with child, and causes such misfortune, cunning, murder, etc."[11] " Satan bitterly hates matrimony," he says in 1537,[12] and, in 1540, " he has great power in matrimonial affairs, for unless God were to stand by us how could the children grow up ?"[13] In matrimonial disputes " the devil shows his finger " ; the Pope gets along easily, " he simply dissolves all marriages " ; but we, " on account of the contentions instigated by the devil," must have " people who can give advice."[14]

Not him alone but many others had the devil affrighted by the " noisy spirits."[15] These noisy spirits were, however, far more numerous before the coming of the Evangel. They were looked upon, quite wrongly, as the souls of the dead, and Masses and prayers were said and good works done to lay them to rest ;[16]

[1] *Ib.*, p. 402 : " *dixit de machinis bellicis et bombardis,*" etc. (1537).
[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 23.
[3] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 262 (1542–43).
[4] *Ib.*, p. 380 (1536).
[5] *Ib.*, " Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 291 : " We see how the milk thieves and other witches often do great mischief " (1543). Cp. Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 121.
[6] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichn.," p. 117 (1532).
[7] " Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 304. [8] *Ib.*, 60, p. 73.
[9] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 322 (1543). [10] *Ib.*, p. 412 f.
[11] " Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 130 ; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 70 (1530).
[12] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 395 f. (1537). [13] *Ib.*, p. 198 (1540).
[14] *Ib.*, p. 240. [15] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 70.
[16] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 585 ; Erl. ed. 10^2, p. 354.

but now "you know very well who causes this; you know it is the devil; he must not be exorcised,[1] rather "we must despise him and waken our holy faith against him;[2] we must be willing to abide the "spooks and spirits" calmly and with faith if God permits them to "exercise their wantonness on us" and "to affright us."[3] Nevertheless, as he adds with much truth, "we must not be too ready to give credence to everyone, for many people are given to inventing such things."[4]

At the present time the noisy spirits are not so noticeable; "among us they have thinned";[5] the chief reason is, that the devils now prefer the company of the heretics, anabaptists and fanatics;[6] for Satan "enters into men, for instance into the heretics and fanatics, into Münzer and his ilk, also into the usurers and others";[7] "the fanatic spirits are greatly on the increase."[8] The false teachers prove by their devilish speech how greatly the devil, "clever and dangerous trickster that he is," "can deceive the hearts and consciences of men and hold them captive in his craze." "What is nothing but lies, idle error and gruesome darkness, that they take to be the pure, unvarnished truth!"[9]

If the devil can thus deceive men's minds, surely it is far easier for him to bewitch their bodily senses. "He can hoax and cheat all the senses,"[10] so that a man thinks he sees something that he can't see, or hears what isn't, for instance, "thunder, pipes or bugle-calls." Luther fancies he finds an allusion to something of the sort in the words of Paul to the Galatians iii. 1: "Who hath bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth [that you should not obey the truth]?"[11] Children can be bewitched by the evil eye of one who is under a spell, and Jerome was wrong when he questioned whether the illness of children in a decline was really due to the evil eye.[12] It is certain that "by his great power the devil is able to blind our eyes and our souls," as he did in the case of the woman who thought she was wearing a crown, whereas it was simply "cow dung."[13] He tells how, in Thuringia, eight hares were trapped, which, during the night,

[1] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 60, p. 70. Cp. p. 31 and Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 585; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 354. [2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 60, p. 63.
[3] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 585; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 354.
[4] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 60, p. 63. [5] *Ib.*, 59, p. 348. [6] *Ib.*
[7] *Ib.*, 60, p. 70. [8] *Ib.*, 59, p. 348.
[9] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 316; Irmischer, 1, p. 279, in the fuller Commentary on Galatians (1535). Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 357: "*In Antinomis furit Sathan*" (1539). *Ib.*, p. 206: "*Anabaptistæ non intelligunt iram Dei, sic excæcantur a diabolo; quare non anguntur, ut sancti, qui hæc omnia sentiunt; diabolus enim ipsorum aures et animos tenet occupatos*," etc. (1540).
[10] "Werke," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 316; Irmischer, 1, p. 279. [11] *Ib.*
[12] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 2, p. 505 f.; Irmischer, 3, p. 251, in the first Commentary on Galatians.
[13] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 97 (1540). Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 409; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 23, in the Exposition of the Ten Commandments, 1518.

were changed into horses' heads, such as we find lying on the carrion heap."[1] Had not St. Macarius by his prayers dispelled the Satanic delusion by which a girl had been changed into a cow in the presence of many persons, including her own parents ? The distressed parents brought their daughter in the semblance of a cow to Macarius " in order that she might recover her human shape," and " the Lord did in point of fact dissolve the spell whereby men's senses had been misled." Luther several times relates this incident, both in conversation and in writing.[2]

There is certainly no lack of marvellous tales of devils either in his works or in his Table-Talk.[3]

The toils of the sorcerer are everywhere. Magic may prove most troublesome in married life, more particularly where true faith is absent ; for, as he told the people in a sermon on May 8, 1524, " conjugal impotence is sometimes produced by the devil, by means of the Black Art ; in the case of [true] Christians, however, this cannot happen."[4]

On the Abode of the Devil ; his Shapes and Kinds

It is worth while to glance at what Luther says of the dwelling-places of the devil, the different shapes he is wont to assume, and the various categories into which demons may be classed.

First, as to his abode. In a sermon recently published, and dating from June 13, 1529, Luther says : " The devil inhabits the forests, the thickets, and the waters, and insinuates himself amongst us everywhere in order to destroy us ; sleep he never does." Preaching in the hot weather, he warns his hearers against the cool waters in which the devil lurks : " Be careful about bathing in the cold water. . . . Every year we hear of people being drowned [by the devil] through bathing in the Elbe."[5]

In another sermon incorporated in the Church-postils he explains how in countries like ours, " which are well watered,"

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 321.

[2] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 40, 1, pp. 315, 317, 319 ; Irmischer, 1, pp. 278, 280, 283 ; Erl. ed., 49, p. 19, in the Exposition of St. John xiv.–xvi. Erl. ed., 59, p. 335.

[3] Cp., for instance, Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," pp. 55, 111. Mathesius, " Tischreden," pp. 97, 130, 174, 198, 279, 380, 436. " Werke," Erl. ed., 59, pp. 317, 320–323 ; 60, pp. 24, 27, 57, 63, 71, etc.

[4] " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 560.

[5] *Ib.*, 29, p. 401. Sermon of 1529. Similarly in the sermon of July 2, 1536, *ib.*, 41, p. 633. Cp. N. Paulus, " Hexenwahn " (see above, p. 278, n. 1), p. 31.

the devils are fond of infesting the waters and the swamps; they sometimes drown those who venture there to bathe or even to walk. *Item*, in some places Naiades are to be met with who entice the children to the water's edge, drag them in and drown them: all these are devils.[1] Such devils can commit fornication with the maidens, and "are able to beget children which are simply devils";[2] for the devil will often drag a girl into the water, get her with child and keep her by him until she has borne her baby; he then lays these children in other people's cradles, removing the real children and carrying them off.[3]

Elsewhere the devils prefer "bare and desolate regions," "woods and wildernesses."[4] "Some are to be found in the thick black clouds, these cause hailstorms, thunder and lightning, and poison the air, the pastures, etc." Hence "*philosophi*" ought not to go on explaining these phenomena as though they were natural.[5] Further, the devil has a favourite dwelling-place deep down in the earth, in the mines, where he "pesters and deceives people," showing them for instance what appears to be "solid silver, whereas it is nothing of the kind."[6] "Satan hides himself in the apes and long-tailed monkeys," who lie in wait for men and with whom it is wrong to play.[7] That he inhabits these creatures, and also the parrots, is plain from their skill in imitating human beings.[8]

In some countries many more devils are to be found than in others. "There are many evil spirits in Prussia and also in Pilappen [Lapland]." In Switzerland the devils make a "frightful to-do" in the "Pilatus tarn not far from Lucerne"; in Saxony, "in the Poltersberg tarn," things are almost as bad, for if a stone be thrown in, it arouses a "great tempest."[9] "Damp and stuffy places" are however the devils' favourite resort.[10] He was firmly convinced that in the moist and swampy districts of Saxony all the devils "that Christ drove out of the swine in Jerusalem and Judæa had congregated"; "so much thieving, sorcery and pilfering goes on that the Evil One must indeed be present in person."[11] The fact of so many devils inhabiting Saxony was perhaps the reason, so he adds quaintly enough, "why the Evangel had to be preached there, i.e. that they might be chased away." It was for this reason, so he repeats, "that Christ came amongst the Wends [Prussians], the worst of all the nations, in order to destroy the work of Satan and to drive out the devils who there abide among the peasants and towns-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 11^2, p. 136. Sermon on Oculi Sunday.
[2] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 248.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 22. Cp. p. 38 f.
[4] *Ib.*, 11^2, p. 136. [5] *Ib.*, 59, p. 287. [6] *Ib.*, p. 324.
[7] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 110. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 108.
[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 179; "Aufzeichn.," pp. 87, 127.
[9] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 13.
[10] *Ib.*, 59, p. 287. There ever was a widespread tendency to connect the Evil One with the water.
[11] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 380 (1536).

people."[1] That he was disposed to believe that a number, by no means insignificant, of devils could assemble in one place is plain from several statements such as, that at the Wartburg he himself had been plagued by "a thousand devils," that at Augsburg every bishop had brought as many devils with him to the Diet as a dog has fleas in hot weather, and, finally, that at Worms their number was probably not far short of the tiles on the roofs.

The forms the devil assumes when he appears to men are very varied; to this the accounts sufficiently bear witness.

He appeared as a goat,[2] and often as a dog;[3] he tormented a sick woman in the shape of a calf from which Luther set her free —at least for one night.[4] He is fond of changing himself into cats and other animals, foxes, hares, etc., "without, however, assuming greater powers than are possessed by such animals."[5] The semblance of the serpent is naturally very dear to the devil. To a sick girl at Wittenberg with whom Luther happened to be, he appeared under the form of Christ, but afterwards transformed himself into a serpent and bit the girl's ear till the blood came.[6] The devil comes as Christ or as a good angel, so as to be the better able to tempt people. He has been seen and heard under the guise of a hermit, of a holy monk, and even, so the tale runs, of a preacher; the latter had "preached so earnestly that the whole church was reduced to tears"; whereupon he showed himself as the devil; but "whether this story be true or not, I leave you to decide."[7] The form of a satyr suits him better, what we now call a hobgoblin; in this shape he "frequently appeared to the heathen in order to strengthen them in their idolatry."[8] A prettier make under which he appears is that of the "brownie"; it was in this guise that he was wont to sit on a clean corner of the hearthstone beside a maid who had strangled her baby.[9] From the behaviour of the devils we may infer that, "so far they are not undergoing any punishment though they have already been sentenced, for were they being punished they would not play so many roguish tricks."[10]

Amongst the different kinds of devils he enumerates, using names which recall the humorous ones common in the old folklore of Germany, are not merely the stupid, the playful, the malicious and the murderous fiends, but also the more sightly ones,[11]

[1] *Ib.*, p. 118 (1540).
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 340. [3] *Ib.*, 60, pp. 64, 66.
[4] *Ib.*, 59, p. 138.
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129 (1540).
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 129. The account assures us that he claimed to have seen the apparition himself.
[7] *Ib.*, 31, p. 363.
[8] "Werke," Weim. ed., 25, p. 140, in the shorter Exposition of Isaias iii. 21.
[9] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 71.
[10] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 300 (1542–44).
[11] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 73.

viz. the familiar and friendly demons ; then again there are the childish little devils who allure to unchastity and so forth though not to unbelief or despair like the more dangerous ones.[1] He is familiar with angelic, shining, white and holy devils, i.e. who pretend to be such, also with black devils and the "supreme majestic devil." The majestic devil wants to be worshipped like God, and, in this, being "so quick-witted," he actually succeeded in the ages before Luther's day, for "the Pope worshipped him."[2] The devil repaid the Pope by bewitching the world in his favour ; he brought him a large following and wrought much harm by means "of lies and magic," doing on a vast scale what the "witches" do in a smaller way.[3]

There are further, as Luther jestingly explains, house-devils, Court-devils and church-devils ; of these "the last are the worst."[4] "Boundless is the devils' power," he says elsewhere, "and countless their number ; nor are they all childish little devils, but great national devils, devils of the sovereigns, devils of the Church, who, with their five thousand years' experience, have grown very knowing . . . in fact, far too cunning for us in these latter days."[5] "Satan knows his business and no one but Jesus Christ can cope with him."[6] Very dangerous indeed are the Court-devils, who "never rest," but "busy themselves at Court, and work all the mischief in the councils of the kings and rulers, thwarting all that is good ; for the devil has some fine rakehells at Court."[7] As for the noisy devils, they had troubled him even in his youth.[8]

The Papists have their own devils who work supposed miracles on their behalf, for the wonders which occur amongst them at the places of pilgrimage or elsewhere in answer to their prayers are not real miracles but devil's make-believe. In fact, Satan frequently makes a person appear ill, and, then, by releasing him from the spell, cures him again.[9]

The above ideas Luther had to a large extent borrowed from the past, indeed we may say that the gist of his fancies concerning the devil was but part of the great legacy of credulity, folk-lore and the mistaken surmises of theologians handed down verbally and in writing from the Middle Ages. Only an age-long accumulation of prejudice, rife particularly among the Saxon people, can explain Luther's rooted attachment to such a congeries of wild fancies.

[1] *Ib.*, 59, p. 294 ; cp. 60, p. 123. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, pp. 235, 318. For an explanation of the word here used see Förstemann, "Tischreden," 3, p. 132, n. 3.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19^2, p. 281 f.

[3] *Ib.*, 32, p. 291 in "Vom Schem Hamphoras," 1543.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 258 (1542–43).

[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 208.

[6] *Ib.*, p. 218.

[7] "Werke," Erl. ed., 46, p. 211 f., in the Exposition of John i. and ii. (1537–38).

[8] *Ib.*, 60, p. 70.

[9] "Werke," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 315 ; Irmischer, 1, p. 277 *sq.*

Assisted by the credulity of Melanchthon and other of his associates Luther not only added to the number of such ideas, but, thanks to his gift of vivid portraiture, made them far more strong and life-like than before. Through his widely-read works he introduced them into circles in which they were as yet scarcely known, and, in particular, established them firmly in the Lutheran world for many an age to come.

The Devil and the Witches

"It is quite certain," says Paulus in his recent critical study of the history of witchcraft, "that Luther in his ideas on witchcraft was swayed by mediæval opinion." "In many directions the innovators in the 16th century shook off the yoke of the Middle Ages; why then did they hold fast to the belief in witches? Why did Luther and many of his followers even outstrip the Middle Ages in the stress they laid on the work of the devil?"[1]

Paulus here touches upon a question which the Protestant historian, Walter Köhler, had already raised, viz.: "Is it possible to explain the Reformers' attachment to the belief in witchcraft simply on the score that they received it from the Middle Ages? How did they treat mediæval tradition in other matters? Why then was their attitude different here?"[2]

G. Steinhausen, in his "Geschichte der deutschen Kultur," writes: "No one ever insisted more strongly than Luther on his rôle [the devil's]; he was simply carried away by the idea. . . . Though in his words and the stories he tells of the devil he speaks the language of the populace, yet the way in which he weaves diabolical combats and temptations into man's whole life is both new and unfortunate. Every misfortune, war and tempest, every sickness, plague, crime and deformity emanates from the Evil One."[3]

Some of what Luther borrowed from the beliefs of his own day goes back to pre-Christian times. The belief in witches comprised much heathen tradition too deeply rooted for the early missionaries to eradicate. Moreover, certain statements of olden ecclesiastical writers incautiously exploited enabled even the false notions of the ancient Græco-Roman world to become also current. Fear of hidden, dangerous forces, indiscriminating repetition of alleged incidents from the unseen, the ill-advised discussions of certain theologians and thoughtless sermons of popular orators, all these causes and others contributed to produce

[1] "Hexenwahn" (see above, p. 278, n. 1), pp. 45, 67.
[2] "Theol. Literaturztng.," 1909, p. 147. Paulus, *ib.*, p. 46.
[3] Leipzig, 1904, p. 518. Cp. Paulus, *ib.*, pp. 1–10.

the crass belief in witches as it existed even before Luther's day at the close of the Middle Ages, and such as we find it, for instance, in the sermons of Geiler von Kaysersberg.

The famous Strasburg preacher not only accepted it as an undoubted fact, that witches were able with the devil's help to do all kinds of astounding deeds, but he also takes for granted the possibility of their making occasional aerial trips, though it is true he dismisses the nocturnal excursions of the women with Diana, Venus and Herodias as mere diabolical delusion. He himself never formally demanded the death-penalty for witches, but it may be inferred that he quite countenanced the severe treatment advocated in the "Witches' Hammer." In his remarks on witches he follows partly Martin Plantsch, the Tübingen priest and University professor, partly, and still more closely, the "*Formicarius*" of the learned Dominican Johannes Nider (1380–1438).[1]

Concerning the witches and their ways Luther's works contain an extraordinary wealth of information.

In the sermons he delivered on the Ten Commandments as early as 1516 and 1517, and which, in 1518, he published in book form,[2] he took over an abundance of superstition from the beliefs current amongst the people, and from such writers as Geiler. In 1518 and 1519 were published no less than five editions in Latin of the sermons on the Decalogue; the book was frequently reprinted separately and soon made its appearance in Latin in some collections of Luther's writings; later on it figures in the complete Latin editions of his works; six German editions of it had appeared up to 1520 and it is also comprised in the German collections of his works. In his old age, when the "evils of sorcery seemed to be gaining ground anew," he deemed it "necessary," as he said,[3] "to bring out the book once more with his own hand"; certain tales, amongst which he instances one concerning the devil's cats and a young man, might serve to demonstrate "the power and malice of Satan" to all the world. One cannot but regard it as a mistake on Luther's part, when, in his sermons on the Ten Commandments, he takes his hearers and readers into the details of the magic

[1] Cp. Paulus, *ib.*, pp. 1–19.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 398 ff.; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 3 *sqq.*

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129 (1540): "*hoc malum* (*sagarum*) *invalescit iterum.*" In 1519 he had lamented that "this evil is noticeably on the increase." "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 590; Irmischer, 3, p. 426, first Commentary on Galatians.

and work of the witches, though at the same time emphasising very strongly the unlawfulness of holding any communication with Satan. This stricture tells, however, as much against many a Catholic writer of that day.

It is in his commentary on the 1st Commandment that he gives us a first glimpse into the world of witches which later was to engross his attention even more.

He is anxious to bring home to the "weaklings" how one can sin against the 1st Commandment.[1] He therefore enumerates all the darkest deeds of human superstition; of their reality he was firmly convinced, and only seldom does he speak merely of their "possibility," or say, "it is believed" that this or that took place. He also divides into groups the people who sin against the virtue of Divine love, doing so according to their age, and somewhat on the lines of a Catechism, in order that "the facts may be more easily borne in mind."

"The third group," he says, "is that of the old women, etc." "By their magic they are able to bring on blindness, cause sickness, kill, etc."[2] "Some of them have their fireside devil who comes several times a day." "There are *incubi* and *succubi* amongst the devils," who commit lewdness with witches and others. Devil-strumpetry and ordinary harlotry are amongst the sins of these women. Luther also speaks of magic potions, desecration of the sacrament in the devil's honour, and secret incantations productive of the most marvellous effects.

His opinion he sums up as follows: "What the devil himself is unable to do, that he does by means of old hags";[3] "he is a powerful god of this world";[4] "the devil has great power through the sorceresses."[5] He prefers thus to make use of the female sex because, "it comes natural to them ever since the time of Mother Eve to let themselves be duped and fooled."[6] "It is as a rule a woman's way to be timid and afraid of everything, hence they practise so much magic and superstition, the one teaching the other."[7] Even in Paradise, so he says, the devil approached the woman rather than the man, she being the weaker.[8]

It is worthy of note that he does not merely base his belief in witchcraft on the traditions of the past but preferably on Scripture directly, and the power of Satan to which it bears witness.

In 1519 he had attempted to prove on St. Paul's authority against the many who refused to believe in such things, that sorcery can cause harm, omitting, however, to make the neces-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 401; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 7.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 406 f.=16.
[3] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 60, p. 57 (heading).
[4] *Ib.*, p. 79.
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129 (1540).
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 406 f.; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 20.
[7] *Ib.*, 12, p. 345. Sermon of 1523.
[8] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 1, p. 190.

sary distinctions.[1] In 1538 he declares: "The devil is a great and powerful enemy. Verily I believe, that, unless children were baptised at an early age no congregations could be formed; for adults, who know the power of Satan, would not submit to be baptised so as to avoid undertaking the baptismal vows by which they renounce Satan."[2]

In the Commentary on Galatians he not merely appeals anew to the apostolic authority in support of his doctrine concerning the devil, but also directly bases his belief in witchcraft on the principle, that it is plain that Satan "rules and governs the whole world," that we are but guests in the world, of which the devil is prince and god and controls everything by which we live: food, drink, clothing, air, etc."[3] By means of sorcery he is able to strangle and slay us; through the agency of his whores and sorceresses, the witches, he is able to hurt the little children, with palpitations, blindness, etc. "Nay, he is able to steal a child and lay himself in the cradle in its stead, for I myself have heard of such a child in Saxony whom five women were not able to supply with sufficient milk to quiet it; and there are many such instances to be met with."[4]

The numerous other instances of harm wrought by witches with which he is acquainted, such as the raising of storms, thefts of milk, eggs and butter,[5] the laying of snares to entrap men, tears of blood that flow from the eyes, lizards cast up from the stomach,[6] etc., all recede into the background in comparison with the harlotry, substitution of children, etc., which the devil carries out with the witches' help. "It is quite possible that, as the story goes, the Evil Spirit can carnally know the sorceresses, get them with child and cause all manner of mischief."[7] Changeling children of the sort are nothing but a "lump of flesh without a soul"; the devil is the soul, as Luther says elsewhere,[8] for which reason he declared, in 1541, such children should simply be drowned; he recalls how he had already given this advice in one such case at Dessau, viz. that such a child, then twelve years of age, should be smothered.[9]

It sometimes happens, so he says, that animals, cats for instance, intent on doing harm, are wounded and that afterwards

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 590; Irmischer, 3, p. 426.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 156; Nov. 4, 1538.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 314 ff.; Irmischer, 1, p. 277 *sqq.*, detailed Commentary on Galatians which is fuller on the question of sorcery than the Commentary of 1519 ("Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 590; Irmischer, 3, p. 426).

[4] *Ib.*, 40, 1, p. 314; Irmischer, 1, p. 277.

[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 121. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 380. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 12.

[6] See Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," p. 117, for both.

[7] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 162; Erl. ed., 33, p. 161. Cp. Erl. ed., 60, pp. 37, 39.

[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 198 (1540). "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 39 f.

[9] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 198. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 40.

the witches are found to have wounds in the same part of the body. In such case the animals were all sham.[1] A mouse trying to steal milk is hurt somewhere, and the next day the witch comes and begs for oil for the wound which she has in the very same place.[2] If milk and butter are placed on coals the devil, he says, will be obliged to call up the witches who did the mischief.[3] "It is also said that people who eat butter that has been bewitched, eat nothing but mud."[4]

In such metamorphoses into animals it was not, however, the witches who underwent the change, nor were the animals really hurt, but it was "the devil who transformed himself into the animal" which was only apparently wounded; afterwards, however, "he imprints the marks of the wounds on the women so as to make them believe they had taken part in the occurrence."[5] At any rate this is the curiously involved explanation he once gives of the difficult problem.

In some passages he, like others too, is reluctant to accept the theory that afterwards grew so prevalent, particularly during the witch persecutions in the 17th century, viz. that the witches were in the habit of flying through the air. In 1540 he says that this, like the changes mentioned above, was merely conjured up before the mind by the devil, and was thus a delusion of the senses and a Satanic deception.[6] Yet in 1538 he assumes that it was in Satan's power to carry those who had surrendered themselves to him bodily through the air;[7] he had heard of one instance where even repentance and confession could not save such a man, when at the point of death, from being carried off by the devil. At an earlier date he had spoken without any hesitation of the witches who ride "on goats and broom-sticks and travel on mantles."[8]

The witches are the most credulous and docile tools of the devil; they are his hand and foot for the harm of mankind. They are "devil's own whores who give themselves up to Satan and with whom he holds fleshly intercourse."[9]

"Such persons ought to be hurried to justice ('*supplicia*'). The lawyers want too much evidence, they despise these open and flagrant proofs." When questioned on the rack

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129 (1540).
[2] *Ib.*, p. 380 (1536).
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 121. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 12. [4] Lauterbach, *ib.*
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129.
[6] *Ib.*: there is no "*motus de loco*," etc., all this "*phantasmata sunt.*" Similarly in "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 409; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 17 *sq.*: the metamorphosis of old women into tom-cats and the nocturnal excursions of the witches to banquets are "delusions of the devil, not actual occurrences"; he, however, admits the possibility. [7] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 111.
[8] See Paulus, *ib.*, pp. 25 ff., 49.
[9] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 111.

they answer nothing, " they are dumb, they despise punishment, the devil will not let them speak. Such deeds are, however, evidence enough, and for the sake of frightening others they ought to be made an example."[1]

" Show them no mercy ! " so he has it on another occasion. " I would burn them myself, as we read in the Law [of Moses] that the priests led the way in stoning the evil-doer."[2] And yet here all the ado was simply about . . . a theft of milk ! But sorcery as such was regarded by him as " lèse majesté " [against God], as a rebellion, a crime whereby the Divine Majesty is insulted in the worst possible of ways. " Hence it is rightly punished by bodily pains and death."[3] He first expresses himself in favour of the death-penalty in a sermon in 1526,[4] and to this point of view he adhered to the end.[5]

Luther's words and his views on witches generally became immensely popular. The invitation to persecute the witches was read in the German Table-Talk compiled by Aurifaber and published at Eisleben in 1566. It reappeared, together with the rest of the contents, in the two reprints published at Frankfurt in 1567, also in the new edition which Aurifaber himself undertook in 1568, as well as in the Frankfurt and Eisleben editions of 1569.[6] Not only were the people exhorted to persecute the witches, but, intermixed with the other matter, we find all sorts of queer witch-stories just of the type to call up innumerable imitations. He relates, for instance, the experiences of his own mother with a neighbour who was a " sorceress," who used to " shoot at her children so that they screamed themselves to death " ; also the tale told him by Spalatin, in 1538, of a little maid at Altenburg

[1] *Ib.*, p. 117, Aug. 20, 1538.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 121, Aug. 25, 1538. " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 12.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 79.
[4] " Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 551 (" *occidantur*," etc.).
[5] See Paulus, *ib.*, p. 43 f., where he quotes Luther's " Von den Conciliis und Kirchen " (1539), in support of the duty of burning witches on account of their compact with the devil, quite apart from the harm they may cause—" Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 441 f. : The witches or " devil's whores, who are burnt at the stake whenever they are caught, as is right, not for stealing milk but because of the blasphemy by which they strengthen the cause of the devil, his sacraments and Churches."
[6] Cp. the Eisleben edition (1569), pp. 280, 280′ : " They should be hurried to the stake. The lawyers require too many witnesses and proofs, they despise these open, etc." The same occurs in the Frankfurt edition (1568), p. 218′.

over whom a spell had been cast by a witch and who "shed tears of blood."

The demonological literature which soon assumed huge proportions and of which by far the greater part emanated from the pen of Protestant writers, appealed constantly to Luther, and reproduced his theories and stories, and likewise his demands that measures should be taken for the punishment of the witches. It may suffice to draw attention to the curious book entitled "Pythonissa, i.e. twenty-eight sermons on witches and ghosts," by the preacher Bernard Waldschmidt of Frankfurt. He demonstrates from Luther's Table-Talk that the devil was able to assume all kinds of shapes, for instance, of "cats, goats, foxes, hares, etc.," just as he had appeared at Wittenberg in Luther's presence, first as Christ, and then as a serpent.[1]

Many Lutheran preachers and religious writers were accustomed to remind the people not only of the tales in the Table-Talk, but also of what was contained in the early exposition of the Ten Commandments, in the Prayer-book of 1522 and in the Church-postils, Commentary on Galatians, etc. Books of instances such as those of Andreas Hondorf in 1568 and Wolfgang Büttner in 1576 made these things widely known. David Meder, Lutheran preacher at Nebra in Thuringia, in his "Eight witch-sermons" (1605), referred in the first sermon to the Table-Talk, also to Luther's exposition of the Decalogue, to his Commentary on Genesis and his work "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen." Bernard Albrecht, the Augsburg preacher, in his work on witches, 1628, G. A. Scribonius, J. C. Gödelmann and N. Gryse all did the same.

In what esteem Luther's sayings were held by the Protestant lawyers is plain from certain memoranda of the eminent Frankfurt man of law, Johann Fischart, dating from 1564 and 1567. Fischart was against the "Witches' Hammer" and the other Catholic productions of an earlier day, such as Nider's "*Formicarius*," yet he expresses himself in favour of the burning of witches and appeals on this point to Luther and his interpretation of Holy Scripture.

Holy Scripture and Luther were as a rule appealed to by the witch-zealots on the Protestant side, as is proved by the writings of Abraham Saur (1582) and Jakob Gräter (1589), of the preacher Nicholas Lotichius and Nicholas Krug (1567), of Frederick Balduin of Wittenberg (1628)—whose statements were accepted by the famous Saxon criminalogist Benedict Carpzov, who signed countless death sentences against witches—and by J. Volkmar Bechmann, the opponent of the Jesuit Frederick von Spee. We

[1] "Pythonissa," Frankfurt, 1660, pp. 471, 472, from Luther's Works, Erl. ed., 58, p. 129 (above, p. 287).

may pass over the many other names cited by N. Paulus with careful references to the writings in question.[1]

It must be pointed out, however, that an increase in the severity of the penal laws against witches is first noticeable in the Saxon Electorate in 1572, when it was decreed that they should be burnt at the stake, even though they had done no harm to anyone, on account of their wicked compact with the devil.[2] As early as 1540, at a time when elsewhere in Germany the execution of witches was of rare occurrence, four persons were burnt at Wittenberg on June 29 as witches or wizards.[3] Shortly before this Luther had lamented that the plague of witches was again on the increase.[4]

Even the Catholic clergy occasionally quoted Luther's statements on witches, as given in his widely read Table-Talk; thus, for instance, Reinhard Lutz in his "True Tidings of the godless Witches" (1571).[5] This writing, at the very beginning and again at the end, contains a passage from the Table-Talk dealing with witches, devils' children, incubi and succubi; on the other hand, it fails to refer either to the "Witches' Hammer" of 1487 or to the Bull, "*Summis desiderantes*," of Innocent VIII (1484).

Thus the making of this regrettable mania was in great part Luther's doing.[6] And yet a reformer could have found no nobler task than to set to work to sweep away the abusive outgrowths of the belief in the devil's power.

We still have instructive writings by Catholic authors of that day which, whilst by no means promoting the popular ideas concerning the devil, are unquestionably rooted in the Middle Ages. Such a work is the Catechism of Blessed

[1] "Hexenwahn," p. 75 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 54 ff.

[3] See Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), vol. xvi., pp. 269 to 526, a very full account of the Witch trials, etc.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 129. From May 21 to June 11, 1540. See above, p. 290, n. 3.

[5] Cp. N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn," pp. 52, 66.

[6] Karl Adolf Menzel, "Neuere Gesch. der Deutschen," 3^2, 1854, p. 65, is of opinion that the reformers of the 16th century lent the whole weight of their position and convictions to strengthening the belief in witches. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," *loc. cit.*: "Through Luther and his followers belief in the power and influence of the devil, who was active in all men and who exercised his arts especially through witches and sorcerers, received an impetus and spread in a manner never known before." J. Hansen, "Zauberwahn und Hexenprozess im MA.," 1900, p. 536 f., also admits that Protestantism had increased the readiness to accept such belief. Cp. the admissions of Riezler, v. Bezold and Steinhausen quoted by Paulus, "Hexenwahn," p. 48 f.

Peter Canisius. One particular in which the "Larger" Canisian Catechism differs from Luther's Larger German Catechism is, that, whereas in the latter the evil power of Satan over material things is dealt with at great length, the Catechism of Canisius says never a word on the material harm wrought by the devil. While Luther speaks of the devil sixty-seven times, Canisius mentions him only ten times. Canisius's book was from the first widely known amongst German-speaking Catholics and served down to the last century for purposes of religious instruction.[1] Though this is true of this particular book of Canisius, the influence of which was so far-reaching, it must in honesty be added that even a man like Canisius, both in his other writings and in his practical conduct, was not unaffected by the prevailing ideas concerning the devil.

Luther's Devil-mania; its Connection with his Character and his Doctrine

Had Luther written his Catechism during the last period of his life he would undoubtedly have brought the diabolical element and his belief in witches even more to the fore. For, as has been pointed out (above, pp. 227, 238), Luther's views on the power the devil possesses over mankind and over the whole world were growing ever stronger, till at last they came to colour everything great or small with which he had to deal; they became, in fact, to him a kind of fixed idea.

In his last year (1546), having to travel to Eisleben, he fancies so many fiends must be assembled there on his account, i.e. to oppose him, "that hell and the whole world must for the nonce be empty of devils."[2] At Eisleben he even believed that he had a sight of the devil himself.[3]

Three years before this he complains that no one is strong enough in belief in the devil; the "struggle between the devils and the angels" affrights him; for it is to be apprehended that "the angels whilst fighting for us often get the worst for a time."[4] His glance often surveys the great world-combat which the few who believe wage on Christ's side against Satan, and which has

[1] Cp. J. Diefenbach, "Der Zauberglaube des 16. Jahrh. nach den Katechismen Luthers und Canisius," 1900.

[2] To Catherine Bora, Feb. 7, 1546, "Briefe," 5, p. 787.

[3] See below, vol. vi., xxxvi., 3.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 295 (1542). "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 117.

lasted since the dawn of history; now, at the very end of the world, he sees the result more clearly. Christ is able to save His followers from the devil's claws only by exerting all His strength; they, like Luther, suffer from weakness of faith, just as Christ Himself did in the Garden of Olives (!); they, like Luther, stumble, because Christ loves to show Himself weak in the struggle with the devil; mankind's and God's rights have come off second best during the age-long contest with the devil. In Jewry, for which Luther's hatred increases with age, he sees men so entirely delivered over to the service of the devil that "all the heathen in a lump" are simply nothing in comparison with the Jews; but even the "fury of the Jews is mere jest and child's play" compared with the devilish corruption of the Papacy.

"The devil is there; he has great claws and whosoever falls into them him he holds fast, as they find to their cost in Popery. Hence let us always pray and fear God." This in 1543.[1] But we must also fear the devil, and very much too, for, as he solemnly declares in 1542: "Our last end is that we fear the devil"; for the worst sins are "delusions of the devil."[2] "The whole age is Satanic,"[3] and the "activity of the devil is now manifest"; the speaker longs for "God at length to mock at Satan."[4] "The devil is all-powerful at present, several foreign kings are his train-bearers. . . . God Himself must come in order to resist the proud spirit. . . . Shortly Christ will make an end of his lies and murders."[5]

The whole of his work, the struggle for the Evangel, seems to him at times as one long wrestling with the boundless might of Satan.[6] All his life, so he said in his old age, he had forged ahead "tempestuously" and "hit out with sledge-hammer blows"; but it was all against Satan. "I rush in head foremost, but . . . against the devil."[7] As early as 1518, however, he knew the "thoughts of Satan."[8]

It is not difficult to recognise the different elements which, as Luther grew older, combined permanently to establish him in his devil-mania.

Apart from his peculiar belief in the devil, of which he was

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 317.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 267, speaking of a case of long-continued adulterous incest between brother and sister (1542): "This was the work of the devil himself," etc.

[3] "*Satanicum tempus et sæculum.*" To Jakob Probst, Dec. 5, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 703.

[4] To Amsdorf, Jan. 8, 1546, *ib.*, p. 774.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 174 (1540).

[6] On the great tragedy between God and Satan in which he (particularly in 1541) is so prominently entangled, see the letter to Melanchthon, April 4, 1541, "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 291.

[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 307 (1542–43).

[8] To Johann Silvius Egranus, March 24, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 173.

never to rid himself, there was the pessimism which loomed so large in his later years ;[1] there was also his habit of regarding himself and his work as the pet aversion and chief object of Satan's persecution, for since, according to his own contention, his great struggle against Antichrist was in reality directed against the devil, the latter naturally endeavoured everywhere to bar his way. If great scandals arise as the result of his sermons, it is Satan who is to blame ; " he smarts under the wounds he receives and therefore does he rage and throw everything into confusion."[2] The disorderly proceedings against the Catholics at Erfurt which brought discredit on his teaching were also due to the devil. The Wittenberg students who disgrace him are instigated by the devil. Dr. Eck was incited against him by Satan. The Catholic princes who resist him, like Duke George of Saxony, have at least a " thousand devils " who inspire them and assist them. Above all, it is the devil himself who delivers his oracles through the mouthpiece of those teachers of the innovations who differ from Luther, deluding them to such an extent that they lose " their senses and their reason."[3] If Satan can do nothing else against the Evangel he sends out noisy spirits so as to bolster up the heresy of the existence " of a Purgatory."[4]

Such ideas became so habitual with him, that, in later years, the conviction that the devil was persecuting his work developed into an abiding mania, drawing, as it were, everything else into its vortex.

Everywhere he hears behind him the footsteps of his old enemy, the devil.

" Satan has often had me by the throat. . . . He has frequently beset me so hard that I knew not whether I was dead or alive . . . but with God's Word I have withstood him."[5] He lies with me in my bed, so he says on one occasion ; " he sleeps much more with me than my Katey."[6] His struggle with him degenerates into a hand-to-hand brawl, " I have to be at grips with him daily."[7] His pupils related, that on his own giving, when he was an old man " the devil had walked with him in the

[1] See above, p. 226 ff.

[2] Thus as early as June 27, 1522, to Staupitz at Salzburg, " Briefwechsel," 3, p. 407, with the emphatic assurance : " *sed Christus, qui cœpit, conteret eum, frustra renitentibus omnibus portis inferi.*"

[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 117.

[4] *Ib.*, 59, p. 342.

[5] *Ib.*, 57, p. 65.

[6] *Ib.*, 58, p. 301.

[7] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 222.

dormitory of the [former] monastery . . . plaguing and tormenting him " ; that " he had one or two such devils who were in the habit of lying in wait " for him, and, " that, when unable to get the better of his heart, they attacked and troubled his head."[1] Whether the narrators of these accounts are referring to actual apparitions or not does not much matter.

Later on, when dealing with his delusions, we shall have to speak of the diabolical apparitions Luther is supposed to have had. There is no doubt, however, that Luther's first admirers took his statements concerning his experiences with the devil rather more seriously than he intended, as, for instance, when Cyriacus Spangenberg in his " Theander Lutherus "[2] relates a disputation on the Winkle-Mass which he supposed Luther to have actually held with the devil, and even goes so far as to prove from the bruises which the devil in person inflicted on him that Luther was " really a holy martyr."[3] Even some of his opponents, like Cochlæus, fancied that because Luther said " in a sermon that he had eaten more than one mouthful of salt with the devil, he had therefore most probably been in direct communication with the devil himself, the more so since some persons were said to have seen the two hobnobbing together."[4] Here we shall merely point out generally that to Luther the power of Satan, his delusions and persecutions, were something that seemed very near,[5] an uncanny feeling that increased as he grew older and as his physical strength gave out.

" The devil is now very powerful," he says in 1540, " for he no longer deals with us through the agency of others, of Duke George, for instance, of the Englishman [Henry VIII], or of the Mayence fellow [Albert], but fights against us visibly. Against him we must pray diligently."[6] " Didn't he even ride many grand and holy prophets. Was not David a great prophet ? And yet even he was devil-ridden, and so was Saul and ' Bileam ' too."[7]

We must, moreover, not overlook the link which binds Luther's devil-mania to his doctrinal system as a whole, particularly to his teaching on the enslaved will and on justification.

Robbed of free-will for doing what is good, when once the devil assumes the mastery, man must needs endure his anger and perform his works. Luther himself found a cruel rider in the devil. Again, though man by the Grace of God

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, pp. 73, 55. Mathesius, " Aufzeichn.," ed. Lœsche, p. 113.

[2] P. 200. Cp. above, p. 174. [3] P. 193'.

[4] " Cochlæi Acta, etc." (1549), p. 2 : " *quod etiam corporaliter visus quibusdam fuerit cum eo conversari.*"

[5] " I feel him well enough." " Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 301.

[6] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 198. [7] *Ib.*, p. 331.

is justified by faith, yet the old diabolical root of sin remains in him, for original sin persists and manifests itself in concupiscence, which is essentially the same thing as original sin. All acts of concupiscence are, therefore, sins, being works of our bondage under Satan ; only by the free grace of Christ can they be cloaked over. The whole outer world which has been depraved by original sin is nothing but the " devil's own den " ; the devil stands up very close (" *propinquissimus* ")[1] even to the pious, so that it is no wonder if we ever feel the working of the spirit of darkness. " Man must bear the image either of God or of the devil." Created to the image of God he failed to remain true to it, but " became like unto the devil."[2]

Hence his doctrines explain how he expected every man to be so keenly sensible of " God's wrath, the devil, death and hell " ; everyone should realise that ours is " no real life, but only death, sin and power of the devil."[3] It is true that in his doctrine faith affords a man sufficient strength, and even makes him master of the devil ; but, as he remarks, this is " in no wise borne out by experience and must be believed beforehand." Meanwhile we are painfully " sensible " that we are " under the devil's heel," for the " world and what pertains to it must have the devil for its master, who also clings to us with all his might and is far stronger than we are ; for we are his guests in a strange hostelry."[4]

The Weapons to be used against the Devil

On the fact that faith gives us strength against all Satanic influences Luther insists frequently and in the strongest terms.

He tries to find here a wholesome remedy against the fear that presses on him. He describes his own attempts to lay hold on it and to fill himself with Christ boldly and trustfully. Even in his last days such words of confidence occasionally pierce the mists of his depression. " We see well," he says, " that when the devil attacks a [true] Christian he is put to shame, for where there is faith and

[1] To Wenceslaus Link, July 14, 1528, " Briefwechsel," 6, p. 301.
[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 51 ; Erl. ed., 33, p. 55.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 51, p. 90 f. (1534).
[4] *Ib.*, cp. above, p. 5.

confidence he has nothing to gain." This he said in 1542 when relating the story of an old-time hermit who rudely accosted the devil as follows, when the latter sought to disturb him at his prayers: "Ah, devil, this serves you right! You were meant to be an angel and you have become a swine."[1]

"We must muster all our courage so as not to dread the devil."[2] We must "clasp the faith to our very bosom" and "cheerfully fling to the winds the apparitions of the spirits"; "they seek in vain to affright men."[3] Contempt of the devil and awakening of faith are, according to Luther, the best remedies against all assaults of the devil.[4] A man who really has the faith may even set an example that others cannot imitate.[5] Luther knows, for instance, of a doctor of medicine who with boundless faith stood up to Satan when the latter, horns and all, appeared to him; the brave man even succeeded in breaking off the horns; but, in a similar case, when another tried to do the same in a spirit of boasting, he was killed by Satan.[6] Hence let us have faith, but let our faith be humble!

But, provided we have faith and rely on Christ, we may well show the devil our contempt for him, vex him and mock at his power and cunning. He himself, as he says, was given to breaking out into music and song, the better to show the devil that he despised him, for "our hymns are very galling to him"; on the contrary, he rejoices and has a laugh when we are upset and cry out "alas and alack!"[7] To remain alone is not good. "This is what I do"; rather than be alone "I go to my swineherd Johann or to see the pigs."[8]

In this connection Luther can tell some very coarse and vulgar jokes, both at his own and others' expense, in illustration of the contempt which the devil deserves; they cannot here be passed over in silence.

Thus, on April 15, 1538, he relates the story of a woman of Magdeburg whom Satan vexed by running over her bed at night "like rats and mice. As he would not cease the woman put her a—— over the bedside, presented him with a f—— (if such language be permissible) and said: 'There, devil, there's a staff, take it in your hand and go pilgriming with it to Rome to the

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 279.
[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 235.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 586; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 355, Church-postils.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 70.
[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 55 f.
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 340. Lauterbach, *ib.*, p. 56.
[7] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 228. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 60, under the heading "Satan flees from music": "It was thus that David with his harp abated Saul's temptations when the devil plagued him" (3 Kg. xvi. 23).
[8] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 313.

Pope your idol.'" Ever after the devil left her in peace, for "he is a proud spirit and cannot endure to be treated contemptuously."[1] According to Lauterbach, who gives the story in somewhat briefer form, Luther sapiently remarked: "Such examples do not always hold good, and are dangerous."[2]

He himself was nevertheless fond of expressing his contempt for the devil after a similar way when the latter assailed him with remorse of conscience.

"I can drive away the devil with a single f——"[3] "To shame him we may tell him: Kiss my a——",[4] or "Ease yourself into your shirt and tie it round your neck," etc.[5] On May 7, 1532, when troubled in mind and afraid lest "the thunder should strike him, he said: 'Lick my a——, I want to sleep, not to hold a disputation.'"[6] On another occasion he exclaims: "The devil shall lick my a—— even though I should have sinned."[7] When the devil teased him at night, "suggesting all sorts of strange thoughts to him," he at last said to him: "Kiss me on the seat! God is not angry as you would have it." Of course, seeing that the devil "'fouls' the knowledge of God," he must expect to be "fouled" in his turn. Luther frequently said, so the Table-Talk relates, that he would end by sending "into his a—— where they belonged" those "twin devils" who were in the habit of prying on him and tormenting him mentally and bodily; for "they had brought him to such a pass that he was fit for nothing."[8] The Pope had once played him (Luther) the same trick: "He has stuck me into the devil's behind";[9] "for I snap at the Pope's ban and am his devil, therefore does he hate and persecute me."[10]

He relates, in May, 1532, according to Schlaginhaufen's Notes, his method of dismissing the devil by the use of stronger and stronger hints: When the devil came to him at night in order to plague him, he first of all told him to let him sleep, because he must work during the day and needed all the rest he could get. Then, if Satan continued to upbraid him with his sins, he would answer mockingly that he had been guilty of a lot more sins which the devil had forgotten to mention, for instance, he had, etc. (there follows the choice simile of the shirt as given above); thirdly, "if he still goes on accusing me of sins I say to him contemptuously: '*Sancte Satanas ora pro me;* you have never done a wrong and you alone are holy; be off to God and get grace for yourself.'"[11]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 343 f.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 56.
[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 165.
[4] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 27.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 3.
[6] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 82.
[7] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 222.
[8] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, pp. 55, 73.
[9] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 30.
[10] *Ib.*, p. 163.
[11] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 88 f. Cp. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 101 f., n. 59.

The way in which Bugenhagen or Pomeranus, the pastor of Wittenberg, with Luther's fullest approval, drove the devil out of the butter churn (vol. iii., p. 229 f.) became famous at Wittenberg, and, thanks to the Table-Talk, elsewhere too. It may here be remarked that the incident was no mere joke. For when, in 1536, the question of the harm wrought by the witches was discussed amongst Luther's guests, and Bartholomew Bernhardi, the Provost, complained that his cow had been bewitched for two years, so that he had been unable to get any milk from her, Luther related quite seriously what had taken place in Bugenhagen's house. ("Then Pommer came to the rescue, scoffed at the devil and emptied his bowels into the churn," etc.). According to Lauterbach's "Diary" Luther returned to the incident in 1538 and stamped the whole proceeding with his approval: "Dr. Pommer's plan is the best, viz. to plague them [the witches] with muck and stir it well up, for then all their things begin to stink."[1] What is even more remarkable than the strange practice itself is the way in which Luther comes to speak of "Pommer's plan." It is his intention to show that the method of combating witches had made progress since Catholic times. For, in Lauterbach, the passage runs: "The village clergy and schoolmasters had a plan of their own [for counteracting spells] and plagued them [the witches] not a little, but Dr. Pommer's plan, etc. (as above).[2] Hence not only did Luther sanction the superstition of earlier ages, but he even sought to improve on it by the invention of new practices of his own.

Luther is also addicted to the habit dear to the German Middle Ages of using the devil as a comic figure; as he advanced in age, however, he tended to drop this habit and also the kindred one of chasing the devil away by filthy abuse; the truth is that the devil had now assumed in his eyes a grimmer and more tragic aspect.

Formerly he had been fond of describing in his joking way how the devil, "though he had never actually taken his doctor's degree,"[3] proved himself an "able logician" in his suggestions and disputations; when he brought forward objections Luther would reply: "Devil, tell me something new; what you say I already know."[4] In his book on the "Winkle-Mass," pretending to "make a little confession," he tells how, "on one occasion,

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 121. Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 12, and Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 380, from Notes of Lauterbach and Weller. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 78.

[2] Lauterbach, *ib.* In the Latin "Colloquia" as well as in the German Table-Talk (*ib.*), in connection with "the clergy and schoolmasters" of the past, it is related, that, in their day, the head of an ox was taken from the fence and thrown into the St. John's bonfire, whereby a great number of witches were attracted to the place. Then follows at once in both passages, in order to emphasise the advance which had been made: "But Dr. Pommer's plan is the best," etc., etc. See vol. iii., p. 230, n. 2.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 218.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 59.

awakening at midnight," the devil began a disputation against the Mass with the words: "Hearken, oh most learned Doctor, are you aware that for some fifteen years you said such Winkle-Masses nearly every day ?"[1] Whereupon he had "seized on the old weapons" which "in Popery he had learnt to put on and to use" and had sought an excuse. "To this the devil retorted: 'Friend, tell me where this is written, etc.'"[2] Formerly he had been fond of poking fun at the Papists by telling them how they "were beset merely by naughty little devils, legal rather than theological ones";[3] that they were tempted only to homicide, adultery and fornication," in short, to sins of the second table of the Law, by "puny fiendkins and little petty devils," whereas we on the other hand have "by us the great devils who are *doctores theologiæ*"; "these attack us as the leaders of the army, for they tempt us to the great sins against the first table," to question the forgiveness of sins, to doubts against faith and to despair.[4]

He was very inventive and quite indefatigable in devising new epithets with the help of the devil's name; his adversaries were, according to him, "full of devils, on whose backs moreover lived other and worse devils"; it seems to him to fall all too short of the truth to say they are "endevilled," "perdevilled," or "super-devilled" and "the children of Satan."[5] The devil's mother, grandmother and brothers and sisters are frequently alluded to by Luther, particularly when in a merry mood. In hours of gloom or emotion he could, however, curse people with such words as "may the devil take you,"[6] "May the devil pay you out," or "May he tread you under foot!"

He was perfectly aware, nevertheless, of the failings of his tongue, and even expressed his regret for them to his friends. During his illness, in 1527, we are told how he begged pardon for and bewailed the "hasty and inconsiderate words he had often used the better to dispel the sadness of a weak flesh."[7]

Melancholy is "a devil's bath" ("*balneum diaboli*"), so he remarked on another occasion, against which there is no more effective remedy than cheerfulness of spirit.[8]

[1] *Ib.*, 31, p. 311.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 316 f.
[3] *Ib.*, 60, p. 61.
[4] *Ib.*, and 59, p. 294.
[5] See below, xxxiii., 4.
[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 129.
[7] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 312. Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 160 *sq.*, and below, p. 314, n. 3.
[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 179 (1540), where Kroker remarks: "A favourite saying with Luther," and quotes Cordatus, "Tagebuch," pp. 130 and 295. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 215, "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 124.

5. The Psychology of Luther's Jests and Satire

Joking was a permanent element of Luther's psychology. Often, even in his old age, his love of fun struggles through the lowering clouds of depression and has its fling against the gloomy anxiety that fills his mind, and against the world and the devil.

Gifted with a keen sense of the ridiculous, it had been, in his younger days, almost a second nature to him to delight in drollery and particularly to clothe his ideas in playful imagery. His mind was indeed an inexhaustible source of rich and homely humour.

Nature had indeed endowed Luther from his cradle with that rare talent of humour which, amidst the trials of life, easily proves more valuable than a gold mine to him who has it. During his secular studies at Erfurt he had been able to give full play to this tendency as some relief after the hardships of early days. His preference for Terence, Juvenal, Plautus and Horace amongst the classic poets leads us to infer that he did so; and still more does Mathesius's description, who says that, at that time, he was a "brisk and jolly fellow." Monastic life and, later, his professorship and the strange course on which he entered must for a while have placed a rein on his humour, but it broke out all the more strongly when he brought his marvellous powers of imagination and extraordinary readiness in the use of the German tongue to the literary task of bringing over the masses to his new ideas.

Anyone desirous of winning the hearts of the German masses has always had to temper earnestness with jest, for a sense of humour is part of the nation's birthright. The fact that Luther touched this chord was far more efficacious in securing for him loud applause and a large following than all his rhetoric and theological arguments.

Humour in his Writings and at his Home

It was in his polemics that Luther first turned to account his gift of humour; his manner of doing so was anything but refined.

The first of his German controversial works against a literary opponent was his "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome wider dem

hochberumpten Romanisten tzu Leiptzk"[1] (the Franciscan Alveld or Alfeld), dating from May and June, 1520. Here he starts with a comical description of the "brave heroes in the market place at Leipzig, so well armed as we have never seen the like before. Their helmets they wear on their feet, their swords on their heads, their shields and breastplates hang down their back, and their lances they grip by the blade. . . . If Leipzig can produce such giants then that land must indeed be fertile." On the last page of the same writing he puts the concluding touch to his work by telling Alveld, the "rude miller's beast," that he does "not yet know how to bray his hee-haw, hee-haw"; were I, says Luther, "to permit all the wantonness of these thick-heads even the very washerwomen would end by writing against me." "What really helps it if a poor frog [like this fellow] blows himself out? Even were he to swell himself out to bursting-point he would never equal an ox."

In his first German booklet against Emser, viz. his "An den Bock zu Leyptzck" (1521),[2] he plays on the motto of Emser's coat-of-arms "Beware of the goat." There was really no call for Emser to inscribe these words on his note-paper, for from his whole behaviour there was no doubt that he was indeed a goat, and also that he could "do no more than butt." Luther's reply to all his threats would be: "Dear donkey, don't lick! But God save the poor nanny-goats, whose horns are wrapped in silk, from such a he-goat; as for me, so God wills, there is no fear. Have you never heard the fable of the ass who tried to roar as loud as the lion? I myself might have been afraid of you had I not known you were an ass," etc.

It is certainly not easy to believe his assertion, that it was only against his will that he had recourse to all this derision which he heaped on his adversaries in religious matters of such vital importance. He has it that his words, "though maybe biting and sarcastic," are really "spoken from a heart that is breaking with grief and has been obliged to turn what is serious into abuse."[3] As a matter of fact the temptation to use just such weapons was too great, and the prospect of success too alluring for us to place much reliance in such an assurance. His "grief" was of quite another kind.

At a later date his humour, or rather his caustic and satirical manner of treating his opponents, looked to him so characteristic of his way of writing, that as he said, it would be quite easy to tell at a glance which were the polemical tracts due to his pen, even though they did not bear his name. This was his opinion of his "satirical list" of the relics of the Cardinal of Mayence.[4] Writing of this work to his friend Jonas he says: "Whoever reads it and has ever been familiar with my ideas and my pen

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 277 ff.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 86 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, 7, p. 262 ff. = 27, p. 200 ff.

[3] In the writing against Alveld, "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 286; Erl. ed., 27, p. 87.

[4] "Briefe," 6, p. 321, of 1542. See above, vol. iv., p. 292.

will say: Here is Luther; the Cardinal too will say: This is the work of that scamp Luther! . . . But never mind; if they pipe then I insist on dancing, and, if I survive, I hope one day to tread a measure with the bride of Mayence [the Cardinal]." He had still "some sweet tit-bits" which he would like "to lay on her red and rosy lips."[1] This last quotation may serve as a specimen of the rough humour found in his controversial letters.

The reader already knows how the Papacy had to bear the brunt of such jests and of an irony which often descends to the depths of vulgarity. (Above, vol. iii., p. 232–235; vol. iv., pp. 295 f., 304 f, 318 ff..)

But it was not only in his polemics that his jests came in useful. The jovial tone which often characterises his domestic life, the humour that seasons his Table-talk (even though too often it oversteps the bounds of the permissible) and makes itself felt even in his business letters and intimate correspondence with friends, appears as Luther's almost inseparable companion, with whose smile and whose caustic irony he cannot dispense.

The monotony and the hardships of his daily life were alleviated by his cheerfulness. His intercourse with friends and pupils was rendered more stimulating and attractive, and in many cases more useful. Under cover of a jest he was often able to enforce good instruction more easily and almost without its being noticed. His cheerful way of looking at things often enabled Luther lightheartedly to surmount difficulties from which others would have shrunk.

There is not the slightest doubt that his extraordinary influence over those who came into contact with him was due in no small part to his kindly addiction to pleasantry. It was indeed no usual thing to see such mighty energy as he devoted to the world-struggle, so agreeably combined with a keen gift of observation, with an understanding for the most trivial details of daily life, and, above all, with such refreshing frankness and such a determination to amuse his hearers.

In order to dispel the anxiety felt by Catherine Bora during her husband's absence, he would send her letters full of affection and of humorous accounts of his doings. He tells her, for instance, how, in consequence of her excessive fears for him "which hindered her from sleeping," everything about him had conspired to destroy him; how a fire "at our inn just next door

[1] Nov. 6, 1542, "Briefe," 5, p. 505; cp. 6, p. 320.

to our room" had tried to burn him, how a heavy rock had fallen in order to kill him; "the rock really had a mind to justify your solicitude, but the holy angels prevented it."[1] In such cheerful guise does he relate little untoward incidents. "You try to take care of your God," he writes to her in a letter already quoted, "just as though He were not Almighty and able to create ten Dr. Martins were the old one to be drowned in the Saale, suffocated in the coal-hole, or eaten up by the wolf."[2]

He was also joking, when, about the same time, i.e. during his stay with the Counts of Mansfeld, he used the words which recently were taken all too seriously by a Catholic polemist and made to constitute a charge against Luther's morals: "At present, thank God, I am well, only that I am so beset by pretty women as once more to fear for my chastity."[3]

The irony with which he frequently speaks and writes of both himself and his friends is often not free from frivolity; we may recall, for instance, his ill-timed jest concerning his three wives;[4] or his report to Catherine from Eisleben: "On the whole we have enough to gorge and swill, and should have a jolly time were this tiresome business to let us."[5] The last passage reminds us of his words elsewhere: I feed like a Bohemian and swill like a German.[6] Among other jests at Catherine's expense we find in the Table-Talk the threat that soon the time will come when "we men shall be allowed several wives," words which perhaps are a humorous echo of the negotiations concerning the Hessian bigamy.[7]

Now and again Luther, by means of his witticisms, tried to teach his wife some wholesome lessons. The titles by which he addresses her may have been intended as delicate hints that her management of the household was somewhat lordly and high-handed: My Lord Katey, Lord Moses, my Chain (Kette) ("*catena mea*"). To seek to infer from this that she was a "tyrant," or to see in it an admission on his part that he was but her slave, would be as mistaken as to be shocked at his manner of addressing her elsewhere in his letters, e.g. "to the holy, careful lady, the most holy lady Doctor; to my beloved lady Doctor Self-martyr; to the deeply-learned Lady Catherine," etc.

It has already been pointed out that many of the misunderstandings of which Luther's opponents were guilty are due to their inability to appreciate his humour; they were thereby led to take seriously as indicative of "unbelief," statements which in reality were never meant in

[1] Feb. 10, 1546, *ib.*, 5, p. 789. [2] Feb. 7, 1546, *ib.*, p. 787.
[3] Feb. 1, 1546, *ib.*, p. 784.
[4] Above, vol. ii., p. 140 f.; also vol. iii., pp. 233 ff., 264 ff., 301; vol. iv., pp. 161 ff., 318 ff.
[5] Feb. 6, 1546, "Briefe," 5, p. 786.
[6] Above, vol. iii., p. 305. [7] *Ib.*, p. 268.

earnest.[1] On the other hand, however, certain texts and explanations of Luther's have, on insufficient grounds, been taken as humorous even by Protestant writers, often because they seemed in some way to cast a slur upon his memory. For instance, his interpretation of the Monk-Calf was quite obviously never intended as a joke.[2] nor can it thus be explained away as some have recently tried to do. Nor, again, to take an example from Luther's immediate circle, can Amsdorf's offer of the nuns in marriage to Spalatin[3] be dismissed as simply a broad piece of pleasantry.

Humour a Necessity to Luther in his Struggle with Others and with Himself

There can be no doubt that a remarkable psychological feature is afforded by the combination in Luther of cheerfulness with intense earnestness in work, indeed the persistence of his humour even in later years when gloom had laid a firm hold on his soul constitutes something of a riddle ; for even the sufferings of the last period of his life did not avail to stifle his love of a joke, though his jests become perhaps less numerous ; they serve, however, to conceal his sadder feelings, a fact which explains why he still so readily has recourse to them.

First of all, a man so oppressed with inner difficulties and mental exertion as Luther was, felt sadly the need of

[1] On certain frivolous expressions which Luther was fond of using of holy things his opponents seized as proofs that he was little better than an atheist or blasphemer. There is indeed no doubt that religious reverence suffered by his jests. Do you suppose Christ was drunk, he repeatedly asks, when He commanded this or that ? The Son of Man came to save what was lost, but He set about it foolishly enough. Unless Our Lord God understands a joke, then I shouldn't like to go to heaven. He even has a jest about the feathers of the Holy Ghost, pokes fun at the Saints, etc., etc.—On the occasion of his journey to Heidelberg, in 1518, undertaken at a grave juncture when the penalties of the Church were hanging over his head, he said jestingly, that he had no need of contrition, confession or satisfaction, the hardships of the journey being equal to "*contritio perfecta*," etc. ("Briefwechsel," 1, p. 184). The Pietists were not so far wrong when they asked in their day : "Who would wish to approve all the jests of that holy man, our dearly-beloved Luther ?" (Cp. Frank, "Luther im Spiegel seiner Kirche" ("Zeitschr. f. wiss. Theol.," 1905, p. 473.)) "Some readers may, for instance, be scandalised at the passages where Luther makes fun of Scripture texts or articles of faith, e.g. the Trinity." Thus in the "Beil. z. M. Allg. Ztng.," 1904, No. 26.

[2] See vol. iii., p. 149 ff. [3] See vol. ii., p. 137.

relaxation and amusement. His jests served to counteract the strain, physical and mental, resulting from the rush of literary work, sermons, conferences and correspondence. In this we have but a natural process of the nervous system.

A further explanation of his cheerfulness is, however, to be found in the wish to prove against his own misgivings and his theological opponents how joyous and confident he was at heart concerning his cause.

He hints at this himself. I will answer for the "Word of Christ," so he assures Alveld in his writing against him, "with a cheerful heart and fresh courage, regardless of anyone; for which purpose God too has given me a cheerful, fearless spirit, which I trust they will be unable to sadden to all eternity."[1] He often gives the impression of being anxious to show off his cheerfulness. He is fond of speaking of his "steadfast and undaunted spirit"; let Emser, he says, take note and bite his lips over the "glad courage which inspires him day by day."

Seeking to display this confidence in face of his opponents he exclaims satirically in a writing of 1518: "Here I am." If there be an inquisitor in the neighbourhood he had better hurry up.[2]

His courage and entire confidence he expressed as early as 1522 to the Elector Frederick of Saxony who had urged him to fight shy of Duke George: "Even if things at Leipzig were indeed as bad as at Wittenberg [they think they are], I should nevertheless ride thither even though—I hope your Electoral Highness will excuse my foolish words—for nine days running it were to rain Duke Georges, each one nine times as furious as he. He actually looks upon my Lord Christ as a man of straw!"[3] In such homely words did he speak, even to his own sovereign whose protection counted for so much, in order to make it yet clearer, that he was quite convinced of having received his Evangel, "not from man, but solely from heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ"; the Prince, his protector, should know, that God, "thanks to the Evangel, has made us happy lords over death and all the devils." For this reason, according to his famous boast, he would still have ridden to Worms in defiance of the devils, even had they outnumbered the tiles on the roofs.[4]

From the castle of Coburg, though himself a prey to all sorts of anxiety, he addressed the following ironical, though at the same time encouraging, admonition to faint-hearted Melanchthon: Why don't you fight against your own self? "What more can the devil do than slay us? What then? You fight in every other field, why not then fight also against your own self,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 323; Erl. ed., 27, p. 138.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 391 f. = 23.

[3] March 5, 1522, *ib.*, Erl. ed., 53, p. 106 f. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 296).

[4] *Ib.*

viz. your biggest enemy who puts so many weapons against you in Satan's hands ? "[1] It was thus that Luther was wont to fight against himself and to rob the devil of his fancied weapons.

Often enough did he find salvation in humour alone, for instance, when he had to overcome serious danger, or to beat down difficulties or the censure of his friends and followers. The plague was threatening Wittenberg ; hence he jokes away his own fears and those of others with a jest about his "trusty weathercock," the governor Metzsch ; the latter had a nose which could detect the plague while yet five ells below the ground ; as he still remained in Wittenberg they had good reason to know that no danger existed. On the same occasion he laughs and cries in the same breath over the behaviour of the schoolboys, all the schools having been already closed as a measure of precaution ; the plague had got into their pens and paper so that it would be impossible to make of them "either preachers, pastors, or schoolmasters ; in the end swine and dogs will be our best cattle, towards which end the Papists are busily working."[2]

Further instances of jests of this sort, made under untoward circumstances, are met with in connection with his marriage. His union with Catherine Bora, as the reader already knows, set tongues wagging, both in his own camp and outside. The resentment this aroused in him he attempted to banish by a sort of half-jesting, half-earnest defiance. "Since they are already cracked and crazy, I will drive them still madder and so have done with it ! "[3] He jests incidentally over the suddenness of his marriage, over the proof needed to convince even himself that he was really a married man, over his surprise at finding plaits of hair beside him when he awoke ; he also makes merry over his not very seemly play on the words Bore and bier.[4]

At a later date he found the arrangement of the new ritual very irksome, both on account of the difficulty of introducing any sort of uniformity and also owing to the petty outside interests which intruded themselves. Here again he tries to throw such questions to the winds by the

[1] June 27, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 35.

[2] To the Elector Johann Frederick, July 9, 1535, "Werke," Erl. ed. 55, p. 95 ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 169).

[3] To Johann Rühel, etc., June 15, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 314 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 195).

[4] See vol. ii., p. 184.

use of humour: "Put on three copes instead of one, if that pleases you," he wrote to Provost George Buchholzer of Berlin, who had sent him an anxious letter of inquiry; and if Joachim, the Brandenburg Elector, is not content with one procession "go around seven times as Josue did at Jericho, and, if your master the Margrave does not mind, His Electoral Highness is quite at liberty to leap and dance, with harps, kettledrums, cymbals and bells as David did before the ark of the Lord."[1]

During the whole of his career he felt the embarrassment of being called upon by the Catholics to produce proof of his higher mission. At times he sought to escape the difficulty, so far as miracles went, by arguing on, and straining for all they were worth, certain natural occurrences; on other occasions, however, he took refuge in jests. On one occasion he even whimsically promised to perform a manifest miracle. This was at a time when he was hard put to provide lodgings for the nuns who had fled to Wittenberg and when it was rumoured that he had undertaken a journey simply to escape the trouble. "'I shall arm myself with prayer,' he said, 'and, if it is needful, I shall assuredly work a miracle.' And at this he laughed," so the notes of one present relate.[2]

Luther frequently lays it down that merry talk and good spirits are a capital remedy against temptations to doubts on the faith and remorse of conscience.

He exhorts Prince Joachim of Anhalt, who had much to suffer from the "Tempter" and from "melancholy," to be always cheerful, since God has commanded us "to be glad in His presence." "I, who have passed my life in sorrow and looking at the black side of things, now seek for joy, and find it whenever I can. We now have, praise be to God, so much knowledge [through the Evangel] that we can afford to be cheerful with a good conscience." It was perfectly true—so he goes on in a strangely shamefaced manner, to tell the pious but faint-hearted Prince—that, at times, he himself still dreaded cheerfulness, as though it were a sin, just as the Prince was inclined to do; "but God-fearing, honourable, modest joy of good and pious people pleases God well, even though occasionally there be a word or merry tale too much."[3]

"Nothing does more harm than a sadness," he declares in 1542. "It drieth up the bones, as we read in Prov. xvii. [22].

[1] Dec. 4, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 317.

[2] Amsdort to Spalatin, April 4, 1523, see Kolde, "Anal. Lutherana," p. 443.

[3] May 23, 1534, "Werke," Erl. ed. 55, p. 54 f. "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 48.

Therefore let a young man be cheerful, and for this reason I would inscribe over his table the words 'Sadness hath killed many, etc.'" (Eccles. xxx. 25).[1]—"Thoughts of fear," he insists on another occasion, "are the sure weapons of death"; "Such thoughts have done me more harm than all my enemies and all my labours." They were at times so insistent that my "efforts against them were in vain." . . . "So depraved is our nature that we are not then open to any consolation; still, they must be fought against by every means."[2]

For certain spells, particularly in earlier years, Luther nevertheless succeeded so well in assuming a cheerful air and in keeping it up for a considerable while, in spite of the oppression he felt within, that those who came into contact with him were easily deceived. Of this he once assures us himself; after referring to the great "spiritual temptations" he had undergone with "fear and trembling" he proceeds: "Many think that because I appear outwardly cheerful mine is a bed of roses, but God knows how it stands with me in my life."[3]

In a word, we frequently find Luther using jocularity as an antidote against depression. As he had come to look upon it as the best medicine against what he was wont to call his "temptations" and had habituated himself to its use, and as these "temptations" practically never ceased, so, too, he was loath to deprive himself of so welcome a remedy even in the dreariest days of his old age. In 1530, to all intents and purposes, he openly confesses that such was the case. In a letter to Spalatin, written from the Coburg at a time when he was greatly disturbed, he describes for his friend's amusement the Diet which the birds were holding on the roof of the Castle. His remarks he brings to a conclusion with the words: "Enough of such jests, earnest and needful though they be for driving away the thoughts that worry me—if indeed they can be driven away."[4]

Still deeper is the glimpse we get into his inmost thoughts when, in his serious illness of 1527, he voiced his regret for his free and offensive way of talking, remarking that it was often due to his seeking "to drive away the sadness," to which his "weak flesh" was liable.

One particular instance in which he resorted to jest as a remedy is related in the Table-Talk; "In 1541, on the Sunday after Michaelmas, Dr. Martin was very cheerful and jested with his good friends at table. . . . He said: Do not take it amiss of me, for I have received many bad tidings to-day and have just read a troublesome letter. Things are ever at their best," so he

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 249.

[2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 450. For other remedies against sadness mentioned here or elsewhere see above, p. 92 f., and below, p. 323, and vol. iii., pp. 175 ff., 305 ff.; vol. iv., p. 311 f.

[3] Bugenhagen's account of Luther's illness and temptations of 1527, from the Latin. Walch's ed. of Luther's Works, 21, p. 158*; Vogt, "Bugenhagens Briefwechsel," 1888, p. 64 ff.

[4] April 23, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 308.

concludes defiantly, "when the devil attacks us in this way."[1]—It is just the same sort of defiance, that, for all his fear of the devil, leads him to sum up all the worst that the devil can do to him, and then to pour scorn upon it. During the pressing anxieties of the Coburg days at the time of the Diet of Augsburg, it really seemed to him that the devil had "vowed to have his life." He comforts himself with the words: "Well, if he eats me, he shall, please God, swallow such a purge as shall gripe his belly and make his anus seem all too small."[2]

It is a matter of common knowledge that people addicted to melancholy can at certain hours surpass others in cheerfulness and high spirits. When one side of the scale is weighed down with sadness many a man will instinctively mend things by throwing humour into the other; at first, indeed, such humour may be a trifle forced, but later it can become natural and really serve its purpose well. The story often told might quite well be true: an actor consulted a physician for a remedy against melancholy; the latter, not recognising the patient, suggested that he might be cheered by going to see the performance of a famous comedian—who was no other than the patient himself.

More on the Nature of Luther's Jests

The character of Luther's peculiar and often very broad and homely humour is well seen in his letter-preface to a story on the devil which he had printed in 1535 and which made the round of Germany.[3]

The devil, according to this "historia . . . which happened on Christmas Eve, 1534," had appeared to a Lutheran pastor in the confessional, had blasphemed Christ and departed leaving behind a horrible stench. In the Preface Luther pretends to be making enquiries of Amsdorf, "the chief and true Bishop of Magdeburg," as he calls him, as to the truth and the meaning of the apparition. He begs him "to paint and depict the pious penitent as he deserves," though quite aware that Amsdorf, the Bishop, would refer back the matter to him as the Pope ("which indeed I am"). He had ready the proper absolution which Amsdorf was to give the devil: "I, by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the most holy Father Pope Luther the First, deny you the grace of God and life everlasting and herewith consign you to hell," etc. Meanwhile he himself gives his

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 310.
[2] To Melanchthon, June 29, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 43.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 86 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 127). The preface is addressed to Amsdorf.

view of the tale, which he assumes to be true, and, as so often elsewhere when he has to do with the devil, proceeds to mingle mockery of the coarsest sort with bitter earnest. When the Evil One ventures to approach so close to the Evangel, every nerve of Luther is strung to hatred against the devil and his Roman Pope, both of whom he overwhelms with a shower of the foulest abuse.

"The devil's jests are for us Christians a very serious matter"; having a great multitude of kings, princes, bishops and clergy on his side he makes bold to mock at Christ; but let us pray that he may soil himself even as he soiled himself in Paradise; our joy, our consolation and our hope is, that the seed of the woman shall crush his head. Hence, so he exclaims, the above absolution sent to Amsdorf is amply justified. Like confession, like absolution; "as the prayer, so the incense," with which words he turns to another diabolical apparition, which a drunken parson had in bed; he had meant to conclude the canonical hours by reciting Compline in bed, and, while doing so, "*se concacavit*,"[1] whereupon the devil appeared to him and said: "As the prayer, so also is the incense."[2]

He applies the same "humorous" story to the Pope and his praying monks in his "An den Kurfursten zu Sachsen und Landgraven zu Hesse von dem gefangenen H. von Brunswig" (1545).[3] "They neither can pray nor want to pray, nor do they know what it is to pray nor how one ought to pray, because they have not the Word and the faith"; moreover, their only aim is to make the "kings and lords" believe they are devout and holy.[4] "On one occasion when a tipsy priest was saying Compline in bed, he heaved during the recital and gave vent to a big 'bombart'; Ah, said the devil, that's just right, as the prayer so also is the incense!" All the prayers of the Pope and "his colleges and convents" are not one whit better "than that drunken priest's Compline and incense. Nay, if only they were as good there might still be some hope of the Pope growing sober, and of his saying Matins better than he did his stinking Compline. But enough of this."[5]

Of this form of humour we have many specimens in Luther's books, letters and Table-Talk, which abound in unsavoury anecdotes, particularly about the clergy and the monks. He and his friends, many of whom had at one time themselves been religious, seem to have had ready an inexhaustible fund of such stories. Some Protestants have even argued that it was in the convent that Luther and his followers acquired this taste, and that such was the usual style of conversation among "monks and celibates." It is indeed possible that the sweepings of the monasteries and

[1] See Dietz, "Wörterbuch, etc." [2] *Ib.*, p. 89.
[3] *Ib.*, 26^2, p. 251. [4] *Ib.*, p. 275. [5] *Ib.*

presbyteries may have furnished some contributions to this store, but the truth is that in many cases the tales tell directly against the monks and clergy, and are really inventions made at their expense, some of them in pre-Reformation times. Frequently they can be traced back to those lay circles in which it was the fashion to scoff at the clergy. In any case it would be unjust, in order to excuse Luther's manner of speech, to ascribe it simply to "cloistral humour" and the "jokes of the sacristy." The evil had its root far more in the coarseness on which Luther prided himself and in the mode of thought of his friends and table companions, than in the monastery or among the clergy. Nearly everywhere there were regulations against foul speaking among the monks, and against frivolous conversation on the part of the clergy, though, of course, the existence of such laws does not show that they were always complied with. That Luther's manner of speech was at all general has still to be proved. Moreover, the reference to Luther's "monkish" habits is all the less founded, seeing that the older he gets and the dimmer his recollections become, the stronger are the proofs he gives of his love for such seasoning; nor must we forget that, even in the monastery, he did not long preserve the true monastic spirit, but soon struck out a way of his own and followed his own tastes.

Luther was in high spirits when he related in his Table-Talk the following tales from the Court of Brandenburg and the city of Florence. At the Offertory of the Mass the grandfather of Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg, attended by a trusty chamberlain, watching the women as they passed up to make their offering at the altar, amused themselves by counting up the adulteresses, supposed or real; as each passed the Margrave told the chamberlain to "draw" a bead of his rosary. The chamberlain's wife happening to pass, the Margrave, to his courtier's mortification, told him to draw a bead also for her. When, however, the Margrave's mother came forward the chamberlain had his revenge and said: Now it's your turn to draw. Upon which the Margrave gathered up his rosary indignantly with the words: "Let us lump all the whores together!"[1]—The Florentine storiette he took from a book entitled "The Women of Florence." An adulteress was desirous of entering into relations with a

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 390.

young man. She accordingly complained quite untruthfully to his confessor, that he had been molesting her against her will; she also brought the priest the presents she alleged he had brought her, and described how by night he climbed up to her window by means of a tree that stood beneath it. The zealous confessor thereupon, no less than three times, takes the supposed peccant lover to task; finally he speaks of the tree. Ah, thinks the young man, that's rather a good idea, I might well try that tree. Having learned of this mode of entry he accordingly complies with the lady's wishes. "And so," concludes Luther, "the confessor, seeking to separate them, actually brought them together. Boundless indeed is the poetic ingenuity and cunning of woman."[1]

Strong as was Luther's whimsical bent, yet we are justified in asking whether the delightful and morally so valuable gift of humour in its truest sense was really his.

"Genuine humour is ever kindly," rightly says Alb. Roderich, "and only savages shoot with poisoned darts." Humour as an ethical quality is the aptitude so to rise above this petty world as to see and smile at the follies and light sides of human life; it has been defined as an optimistic kind of comedy which laughs at what is funny without, however, hating it, and which lays stress on the kindlier side of what it ridicules.

Of this happy, innocent faculty gently to smooth the asperities of life Luther was certainly not altogether devoid, particularly in private life. But if we take him as a whole, we find that his humour is as a rule disfigured by a bitter spirit of controversy, by passion and by hate. His wit tends to pass into satire and derision. Here we have anything but the overflowing of a contented heart which seeks to look at everything from the best side and to gratify all. He may have delighted his own followers by his unmatched art of depreciating others in the most grotesque of fashions, of exaggerating their foibles, and, with his keen powers of imagination, of giving the most amusingly ignominious account of their undoing, but, when judged impartially from a literary and moral standpoint, his output appears more as irritating satire, as clever, bitter word-play and sarcasm, rather than as real humour.

[1] *Ib.*

CHAPTER XXXII

A LIFE FULL OF STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE

1. On Luther's "Temptations" in General

An account given by Luther himself in 1537 and taken down by his pupils from his own lips is the best introduction to the subject now to be considered.

"He spoke of his spiritual sickness ('*morbus spiritualis*'). For a fortnight he had tasted neither food nor drink and had had no sleep. 'During this time,' so he said, 'I wrestled frequently with God and impatiently upbraided Him with His promises.'" While in this state he had been forced to complain, with the sick and troubled Job, that God was killing him and hiding His countenance from him; like Job, however, he had learnt to wait for His assistance, for here too his case was like that of the "man crushed, and delivered over to the gates of death" and on whom the devil had poured forth his wrath. How many, he adds, have to wrestle like he and Job until they are able to say "I know, O God, that Thou art gracious."[1]

Other statements of Luther's at a later period supply us with further information. Lauterbach notes, on Oct. 7, 1538, the complaint already quoted: "I have my mortal combats daily. We have to struggle and wrangle with the devil who has very hard bones, till we learn how to crack them. Paul and Christ had hard work enough with the devil."[2] On Aug. 16 of the same year Lauterbach takes down the statement: "Had anyone else had to undergo such temptations as I, he would long since have expired. I should not of my own have been able to endure the blows of Satan, just as Paul could not endure the all-too-great temptations of Christ. In short, sadness is a death in itself."[3]

With the spiritual sickness above mentioned was combined, as

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 406: "*Mentionem fecit morbi sui spiritualis. Nam in* 14 *diebus nihil edit neque bibit neque dormivit.* '*Quo tempore sœpius disputavi cum Deo,*'" etc.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 144.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 113. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 16.

has been already pointed out (above, p. 226 f.), a growing state of depression: "I have lived long enough," he said in 1542; "the devil is weary of my life and I am sick of hating the devil."[1] Terrible thoughts of the "Judgment of God" repeatedly rose up before him and caused him great fear.[2]

Before this, according to other notes, he had said to his table companions, that he was daily "at grips with Satan";[3] that during the attacks of the devil he had often not known whether he were "dead or alive."[4] "The devil," so he assures them, "brought me to such a pitch of despair that I did not even know if there was a God."[5] "When the devil finds me idle, unmindful of God's Word, and thus unarmed, he assails my conscience with the thought that I have taught what is false, that I have rent asunder the churches which were so peaceful and content under the Papacy, and caused many scandals, dissensions and factions by my teaching, etc. Well, I can't deny that I am often anxious and uneasy about this, but, as soon as I lay hold on the Word, I again get the best."[6]

To the people he said, in a sermon in 1531: "The devil is closer to us than we dream. I myself often feel the devil raging within me. Sometimes I believe and sometimes I don't, sometimes I am cheerful and sometimes sad."[7]—A year later he describes in a sermon how the devil, who "attacks the pious," had often made him "sweat much and his heart to beat," before he could withstand him with the right weapon, viz. with God's Word, namely, the office committed to him and the service he had rendered to the world, "which it was not his to belie!"[8] Some ten years before this he had spoken still more plainly to his hearers at Wittenberg, telling them, strange to say, of his experience in early days of the good effects of confession: "I would not for all the treasures of the world give up private confession, for I know what strength and comfort it has been to me. No one knows what it can do unless he has fought often and much with the devil. Indeed, the devil would long ago have done for me, had not confession saved me." In fact whoever tells his troubles to his brother, receives from him, as from God, comfort "for his simple conscience and faint heart"; seldom indeed did one find a "strong, firm faith" which did not stand in need of

[1] To Justus Menius, May 1, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 467.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 159, June 18, 1540: "*tentari de blasphemia, de iudicio Dei, ibi nec peccatum intelligimus nec remedia novimus.*" According to other passages he is here speaking from his own experience.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 222.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 65.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 66.

[6] *Ib.*, 60, p. 82 f.

[7] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 266; Erl. ed., 19^2, p. 76. Sermon at Michaelmas. In place of the devil's "raging" ("Rasen"), as in Erl. ed., the Weim. ed. reads "nosing" ("Nasen") [? "Nahsein"]. Rorer's MS. reads: "*Et in me sentio satanæ nisum.*"

[8] "Werke," Weim. ed., 36, p. 476; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 359, Sermon on 1 John iv. (16–21).

this; hardly anyone could boast of possessing it. "You do not know yet," he concludes, "what labour and trouble it costs to fight with and conquer the devil. But I know it well, for I have eaten a mouthful or two of salt with him. I know him well, and so does he know me."[1]

After all these remarkably frank admissions there can remain no doubt that a heavy mist of doubts and anxieties overshadowed Luther's inner life.

A closer examination of this darker side of his soul seems to promise further information concerning his inner life. Here, too, it is advisable to sum up the phenomena, retracing them back to their very starting-point. Though much of what is to be said has already been mentioned, still, it is only now, towards the end of his life, that the various traits can in any sense be combined so as to form something as near a complete picture as possible. We have to thank Luther's communicativeness, talkativeness and general openness to his friends, that a tragic side of his inner life has been to some extent revealed, which otherwise might for ever have been buried in oblivion.

It is true that, to forestall what follows, few nowadays will be disposed to follow Luther and to look on the devil as the originator of his doubts and qualms of conscience. His fantastic ideas of the "diabolical combats" he had to wage, form, as we shall see (below, p. 329 ff.), part of his devil-mania. Nevertheless his many references to his ordinary, nay, almost daily, inward combats or "temptations," as he is accustomed to style them, are not mere fabrications, but really seem to come from a profoundly troubled soul. In what follows many such utterances will be quoted, because only thus can one reach a faithful picture of his changing moods which otherwise would seem barely credible. These utterances, though usually much alike, at times strike a different note and thus depict his inner life from a new and sometimes surprising side.

2. The Subject-matter of the "Temptations"

The spiritual warfare Luther had to wage concerned primarily his calling and his work as a whole.

"You have preached the Evangel," so the inner voice,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, pp. 61 f., 63 f.; Erl. ed., 28, pp. 283, 285, at the end of the eight sermons against Carlstadt.

which he describes as the devil's tempting, says to him; "But who commanded you to do so, '*quis iussit?*' Who called upon you to do things such as no man ever did before? How if this were displeasing to God and you had to answer for all the souls that perish?"[1]

"Satan has often said to me: How if your own doctrine were false which charges the Pope, monks and Mass-priests with such errors? Often he so overwhelmed me that the sweat has poured off me, until I said to him, go and carry your complaints to my God Who has commanded me to obey this Christ."[2]—"The devil would often have laid me low with his argument: 'Thou art not called,' had I not been a Doctor."[3]—"I have had no greater temptation," he said after dinner on Dec. 14, 1531, "and none more grievous than that about my preaching; for I have said to myself: You alone are at the bottom of this; if it's all wrong you have to answer for all the many souls which it brings down to hell. In this temptation I have often myself descended into hell till God recalled me and strengthened me, telling me that it was indeed the Word of God and true doctrine; but it costs much until one reaches this comfort."[4]—"Now the devil troubles me with other thoughts [than in the Papacy], for he accuses me thus: Oh, what a vast multitude have you led astray by your teaching! Sometimes amidst such temptation one single word consoles me and gives me fresh courage."[5]

Not merely does he say this in the Table-Talk but even writes it in his Bible Commentaries. In his exposition of Psalm xlv. he speaks of an "argumentation and objection" which the devil urges against him: "Lo, you stand all alone and are seeking to overthrow the good order [of the Church] established with so much wisdom. For even though the Papacy be not without its sins and errors, what about *you?* Are *you* infallible? Are *you* without sin? Why raise the standard of revolt against the house of the Lord when you yourself can only teach them what you yourself are full of, viz. error and sin? These thoughts," he continues, "upset one very much. . . . Hence we must learn that all our strength lies in hearing God's Word and laying hold on it, in seeing God's works and believing in them. Whoever does not do this will be taken captive by the devil and overthrown." He is fully cognisant of the strength of the objection which dogs his footsteps: Though sins and faults are to be met with in individual members of the hierarchy, still we must honour their "office and authority."[6]

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 221 *sq.*

[2] *Ib.*, 3, p. 154 *sq.* "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 70. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 107. Taken from Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 26, 1532.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 243.

[4] Schlaginhaufen, p. 11 (Dec. 14, 1531). Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 46.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 128.

[6] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 18, p. 223.

Among Luther's peculiar doctrines the principal ones which became the butt of "temptations" were his fundamental theses on Justification, on the Law and on good works.

With regard to his doctrine of Justification, on Dec. 14, 1531, he gave his pupil Schlaginhaufen, who also failed to find comfort in it, some advice as to how he was to help himself. The devil was wont "to come to him" [Luther] with righteousness and to "insist on our being actively righteous," and since none of us are, "no one can venture to stand up to him"; what one should do was, however, resolutely to fall back on passive righteousness and to say to Satan: Not by my own righteousness am I justified, but by the righteousness of the man Christ. "Do you know Him?" In this way we vanquish him by "the Word." Another method, also a favourite one of his,[1] so he instructs his anxious pupil, was to rid oneself of such ideas by "thinking of dancing, or of a pretty girl; that also is good," eating and drinking are likewise helpful; for one who is tempted, fasting is a hundred times worse than eating and drinking."[2]—"This is the great art," he repeats at the beginning of the following year, looking back upon his own bitter experiences, "to pass from my sin to Christ's righteousness to know that Christ's righteousness is mine as surely as I know that this body is mine. . . . What astonishes me is that I cannot learn this doctrine, and yet all my pupils believe they have it at their finger-tips."[3]

The doctrine of the Law in its relation to the Gospel, a point which he was never able to make quite clear to himself, constituted in his case an obstacle to peace of mind.[4] In consequence of his own experience he warns others from the outset against giving way to any anxious thoughts about this: "Whoever, Law in hand, begins to dispute with the devil is already a beaten man and a prisoner. . . . Hence let no one dare to dispute with him about the Law, or about sin, but let him rather desist in good time."[5] "When Satan reproaches me and says: 'The Law is also the Word of God,' I reply: 'God's Word is only the promise of God whereby He says: Let me be Thy God. In addition to this, however, He also gives the Law, but for another purpose, not that we may be saved thereby."[6]

But God, as Luther was well aware, will, as He threatens, judge people by their fulfilment of the Law and only grant salvation to those who keep it.

The stern and clear exhortations of Scripture on fidelity to the

[1] See vol. iii., pp. 175 f., 178 f.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 11. Cp. *ib.*, Veit Dietrich's statement, and vol. iii., p. 177 f.

[3] Schlaginhaufen, p. 41, Jan.–March, 1532. Cp. Cordatus, p. 131; "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 298; "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 402.

[4] Above, p. 7 ff. [5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 301.

[6] *Ib.*, p. 301 f.

Law and on penance for its transgression often filled his soul with the utmost terror, and so did the text: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). Even in one of his sermons he confessed to the people in this connection, that he was acquainted from experience "with the cunning of the devil and his malicious tricks, how he is wont to upbraid us with the Law . . . to make a real hell for us so that the wide world seems all too narrow to hold us"; the devil depicts Christ "as though He were angry with sinners"; "he grabs a text of Holy Scripture, or one of Christ's warnings, and suddenly stabs us so hard in the heart . . . that we actually believe it, nay, our conscience would swear to it a thousand times," that "it was indeed Christ Who inspired such thoughts, whereas all the while it was the devil himself." "Of what I say I have had some experience myself."[1] He then goes on to quote the above exhortation to penance as an instance of the sort of warning on which the devil seizes, though these words have ever been regarded by God-fearing Christians as a powerful incentive to religion and not at all as productive of excessive fear, at least in those who put their trust in grace. Luther, however, thinks it right to add: "By fear the devil fouls and poisons with his venom the pure and true knowledge of Christ."

Hence it is useless, or at best but a temporary expedient, to refrain from disputing with Satan on the Law. Nor is Luther's invitation much better: "When a man is tempted, or is with those who are tempted, let him slay Moses and throw every stone at him on which he can lay hands."[2]

His doctrine of good works was no less a source of disquietude to Luther. He declared that Satan was sure of an "easy victory" "once he gets a man to think of what he has done or left undone." What one had to do was to retort to the devil, strong in one's fiducial faith: "Though I may not have done this or that good work, still I am saved by the forgiveness of sins, as baptised and redeemed by the flesh and blood of Christ"; beyond this he should not go: "Faith ranks above deeds"; still, so he adds, before a man reaches this point, all may be over for him. "It is hard in the time of temptation to get so far; even Christ found it difficult"; "it is hard to escape from the idea of works," i.e. from believing that they as much as faith are required for salvation and that they are meritorious.[3]

The "devil" also frequently twitted Luther, so he declares, with the consequences of his doctrines.

"Often he tormented me," he says, "with words such as these: 'Look at the cloisters; formerly they enjoyed a delightful peace,

[1] *Ib.*, 20^2, 1, p. 161, Sermon on Gal. i. 4 f. (1538).

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 48, with the addition: "But the Law must be preached to those who are well."

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 222.

of which you have made an end; who told you to do such a thing?'" On one occasion, when making some such admissions concerning the effect of his teaching on the religious vows, one interrupted him and tried to show that he had merely insisted that God was not to be worshipped by the doctrines and commandments of men (Mt. xv. 9), and that the dissolution of the monasteries was not so much his work as a consequence ordained by God; Luther replied frankly: "My friend, before such a thought would have occurred to me during such temptations I should indeed have been in a fine sweat."[1]

"When Satan finds me idle and not armed with the Word," so we read in the notes made of one of his sermons,[2] "he puts it into my conscience that I am a disturber of the public order, a preacher of false doctrines and a herald of revolt. This he often does. But as soon as I make use of the Word as a weapon I get the best, for I answer him. . . . It is written you must hear this man [the Son of God] or everything falls. God heeds not the world, even were there ten rebellious worlds. It was thus that Paul, too, had to console himself when accused of preaching sedition against God and the Emperor."[3] In this wise does Luther seek to fall back on Christ and on his divine commission.

He frequently, indeed usually, appeals to this source of consolation, and it is therefore due to him to quote a few more such statements. He struggles, in spite of all his fears, not to relinquish his peculiar trust in Christ.

Yet, as he often complains in this connection, "the devil knows well how to get me away."[4]

"He says to me: See how much evil arises from your doctrine. To which I reply: Much good has also come of it. Oh, says he, that is a mere nothing! He is a fine talker and can make a great beam of a little splinter, and destroy what is good and dissolve it into thin air. He has never been so angry in his life. . . . I must hold fast to Christ and to the Evangel. He frequently begins to dispute with me about this, and well knows how to get me away. He is very wroth, I feel it and understand it well."[5]— The moral consequences of the religious innovations, and the disunion so rife undoubtedly weighed heavily on Luther. "We, who boast of being Evangelical," so he is impelled to exclaim in 1538, "fling the most holy Gospel to the winds as though it were but a quotation from Terence." "Alas, Good God, how bitter the devil must be against us, to incite the very ministers of the Word against each other and to inspire them with mutual hatred!"[6]

Misgivings as to his own salvation also constituted a source of profound anxiety for Luther.

[1] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 122.
[2] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," ed. Lœsche, p. 411. Cp. Khummer, in Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 74.
[3] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 363. [4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, 301.
[5] *Ib.* [6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 21.

So repeatedly did he hear in fancy the devil announcing to him in a voice of thunder his eternal damnation, that he was, as he confesses, almost reduced to despair and to blasphemy.

"When we are thus tempted to blasphemy on account of God's judgment," so he said on June 18, 1540, "we fail to see either that it is a sin, or how to avoid it," "such abominable thoughts does the prince of this world suggest to the mind: Hatred of God, blasphemy, despair; these are the devil's own fiery darts; St. Paul understood them to some extent when he felt the sting of the devil in his flesh [2 Cor. xii. 7]. These are the high temptations [which, as he explains elsewhere, were reserved for himself and for his preachers]. No Pope has known them. These stupid donkeys were familiar with no other temptations than those of carnal passion. . . . To such they capitulated, and so did 'Jeronimus.' Yet such temptations are easily to be remedied while virgins and women remain with us."[1]—But in that other sort of temptation it is hard to "keep cheerful" and to tell the devil boldly: "God is not angry as you say."[2]

On one occasion Melanchthon watched him during such a struggle, when he was battling against despair and the appalling thought that he had been delivered over to the "wrath of God and the punishment of sin." Luther, he says, was in "such sore terror that he almost lost consciousness," and sighed much as he wrestled with a text of Paul on unbelief and grace.[3]

Several incidents and many utterances noted down from Luther's own lips give us an even better insight into the varying character of his "temptations" and into their nature as a whole.

3. An Episode. Terrors of Conscience become Temptations of the Devil

Schlaginhaufen and Luther

Johann Schlaginhaufen, the pupil of Luther whom we have had so frequent occasion to mention, complained to his

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 159.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 47.
[3] "Vitæ reformatorum," ed. Neander, "Vita Lutheri," c. 4, p. 5. The text was Rom. xi. 32.

master in the winter of 1531 of the deep anxiety from which he could not shake himself free, which led him to fear for the salvation of his soul. Luther sought in vain to comfort the troubled man by pointing to his own case.[1] The fact that the master attributed the whole matter to the devil only added to the confusion of his unfortunate pupil. So much was Schlaginhaufen upset, that on one occasion, on New Year's Eve, 1531, he actually swooned whilst on a visit to Luther's house. Luther, nothing abashed, promptly exorcised the devil who had brought on the fainting-fit, using thereto the Bible words: "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan" (Zach. iii. 2: "*Increpet te Dominus*"); he added: "He [the devil], who should be an angel of life, is an angel of death. He tries us with lying and with murder."

Schlaginhaufen, after having been put to bed, began to come to, whereupon Luther consoled him thus: "David suffered such temptations; I too have often experienced similar ones, though to-day I have been free from them and have had nothing to complain of save only a natural weakness of the head. Let the godless, Cochlæus, Faber and the Margrave [Joachim I of Brandenburg] be afraid and tremble. This is a temptation of the spirit; it is not meant for us, for we are ministers and vicars of God." Here Schlaginhaufen groaned: "Oh, my sins!" Luther now tried to make him understand that he must turn to the thought of grace and forget all about the Law. "Oh, my God," replied the young man, echoing his master's own thoughts, "the tiniest devil is stronger than the whole world!" But Luther pointed out that there were even stronger good angels present for the Christian's protection. He went on, "Satan is as hostile as can be to us. Were we only to agree to worship the Pope, we should be his dear children, enjoy perfect peace and probably become cardinals. It is not you alone who endure such temptations; I am inured to them, and Peter too and Paul were acquainted with them. . . . We must not be afraid of the miscreant." When Schlaginhaufen had sufficiently recovered to return to his lodgings close by, Luther paternally admonished him to mix more freely with others and, for the rest, to trust entirely in his teacher. His own waverings did not prevent him from giving the latter piece of advice.[2]

Of the temptations by which he himself was visited, "to despair, and to dread the wrath of God," he had already said to Schlaginhaufen, on Dec. 14, 1531: Had it not been for them he would never have been able to do so much harm to the devil, or to preserve his own humility; now, however, he knew to his shame that "when the temptation comes I am unable to get the

[1] Cp. above, p. 323.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 19 ff.

better of a single venial sin. Thanks to these temptations I have attained to such knowledge and to such gifts, that, with the help of God, I won that glorious victory (' *illam præclaram victoriam* '), vanquishing my monkish state, the vows, the Mass and all those abominations." " After that I had peace," he says, speaking of those earlier years, " so that I even took a wife, such good days had I."[1]—Yet his own contemporary statements show that inward peace was not his at the time when he took a wife.[2]

An incident related of Luther by Schlaginhaufen shows how a single text of Scripture, and the train of ideas it awakened, could reduce him, and Bugenhagen too, to a state verging on distraction. " The devil on one occasion," so Luther said to him, " tormented and almost slew me with Paul's words to Timothy [1 Tim. v. 11–12], so that my heart melted in my bosom ; the reason was the abandoning by so many monks and nuns of the religious state in which they had vowed to God to live." (Paul, in the passage cited, has strong things to say of widows who prove unfaithful to the widowhood in which they had promised to live.) " The devil," he continues concerning his attitude towards the devil at that time, " hid from my sight the doctrine of Justification so that I never even thought of it, and obtruded on me the text ; he led me away from the doctrine of grace to dispute on the Law, and then he had me at his mercy. Bugenhagen happened to be near at the time. I submitted it to him and went with him into the corridor. But he too began to doubt, for he did not know that I was so hard put about it. Thereupon I was at first much upset and passed the night with a heavy heart. Next day Bugenhagen came to me. ' I am downright angry,' he said, ' I have now looked into that text more closely, and, right enough, the argument is ridiculous ! ' Thus he [the devil] is always on the watch for us. But nevertheless we have Christ ! "[3]—We are not told why the argument from this Bible-passage, which insists so solemnly on the sacred character of vows, was regarded as " ridiculous."

The last incident reminds us of the scene between Luther and Bugenhagen on June, 1540, narrated in the Table-Talk ; there Luther declares : " No sooner am I assailed by temptation than the flesh begins to rebel even though I understand the spirit. . . . Gladly would I be formally just, but I do not find it in me." And Bugenhagen chimed in : " Herr Doctor, neither do I."[4]

[1] *Ib.*, p. 9. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 177 f.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 180 f. Cp. Melanchthon's statement, p. 177.

[3] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 10.

[4] Mathesius, " Aufzeichn.," p. 147 f., June 11–19, 1540. See vol. iii., p. 203 f.

From Remorse of Conscience to Onslaughts of the Devil

The actual cause of Luther's anxiety, as is plain from the above, was a certain quite intelligible disquiet of conscience. Yet, he chose to regard all reproaches from within as merely the sting of the Evil One. As time went on this became more and more his habit; it is always the evil spirit who is at his heels, at whose person and doings, Luther, following his bent, pokes his jokes.

Hieronymus Weller, another pupil tormented with inner pangs, once, without any beating about the bush, put down all his sadness to his conscience; he declared in Luther's presence in the spring of 1532: "Rather than endure such troubles of conscience I would willingly go through the worst illnesses."[1] Luther tried his best to pacify him with the assurance that the devil was "a murderer," and that "God's Mercy endureth for ever and ever."

Yet Luther himself had admitted to his friend Wenceslaus Link, that "it is extremely difficult thoroughly to convince oneself that such thoughts of hopelessness emanate from Satan and are not our very own, but the best help is to be found in this conviction. One must by a supreme effort contrive to turn one's mind to other things and chase such thoughts away." "But you can guess how hard it is," he continues, "when the thoughts refer to God and to our eternal salvation; they are of such a nature that our conscience can neither tear itself away from them nor yet despise them."[2] Simply to tear itself away from such disquieting thoughts was certainly not possible for a conscience in so luckless a position as Luther's, oppressed as it was with the weight of a world catastrophe.

Luther once, in 1532, says quite outspokenly and not without a certain reference to himself: "The spirit of sadness is conscience itself"; here, however, he probably only means that we are always conscious within ourselves of a painful antagonism to the Law, for he at once goes on: "This we must ever endure," we must necessarily be ever in a state of woe because in this life we "lie amidst the throes of childbirth that precede the Last Day;" but the devil who condemns us inwardly "has not yet condemned"

[1] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 39.
[2] July 14, 1528, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 300.

Christ. Those who are thus tempted " do not feel those carnal temptations, which are so petty compared with the spiritual."[1]

At any rate, so he will have it, there was a call to struggle most earnestly against all the inward voices that make themselves heard against the new teaching and the apostasy, just as though they came from the devil.[2]

He was helped in this, on the one hand, by his terrible energy, and, on the other, by a theological fallacy : " God has commanded that we should look to Christ for forgiveness of our sins ; hence whoever does not do so makes God a liar ; I must therefore say to the devil : Even though I be a scamp, yet Christ is just."[3]

Thus we find him declaring, for instance, in July, 1528 : " to yield to such disquiet of conscience is to be overcome by Satan, nay, to set Satan on the throne ! " " Such thoughts may appear to be quite heavenly and called for, but they are nevertheless Satanic and cannot but be so." When they refuse to depart, even though spurned by us, and we endure them patiently, then do we indeed " present a sublime spectacle to God and the angels."[4]—" Away with the devil's sadness ! " so, at a later date, in 1544, he exhorts his old friend Spalatin ; " conscience stands in the cruel service of the devil ; a man must learn to find consolation even against his own conscience."[5]

4. Progress of his Mental Sufferings until their Floodtide in 1527–1528

If we glance at the history of Luther's so-called " temptations " throughout the whole course of his career, we shall find that they were very marked at the beginning of his enterprise. Before 1525 they had fallen off, but they became again more frequent during the terrors of the Peasant War and then reasserted themselves with great violence in 1527. After abating somewhat for the next two

[1] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichn.," p. 40 : " *Tristitiæ spiritus est ipsa conscientia.*" Cp. " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, pp. 296, 298, and " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, 108.

[2] Cp. above, p. 66 ff.

[3] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 26, Jan.–March, 1532.

[4] To Link, July 14, 1528, " Briefwechsel," 6, p. 301 f.

[5] March 8, 1544, " Briefe," 5, p. 635 : " *solari contra conscientiam, quæ est mortis sævissimum ministerium.*" Cp. above, p. 67.

years they again assumed alarming proportions in 1530 in the solitude of the Coburg and thus continue, with occasional breaks, until 1538. From that time until the end of his life he seemed to enjoy greater peace, at least from doubts regarding his own salvation, though, on the other hand, gloomy depression undoubtedly darkened the twilight of his days, and he complains more than ever of the weakness of his own faith; we miss, however, those vivid accounts of his struggles of conscience which he had been wont to give.

The Period Previous to 1527

Let us listen first of all to Luther's self-reproach in the early days of his public labours; we may recall those words of 1521 where he confesses, that, before he had grown so bold and confident, "his heart had often quaked with fear," when he thought of the words of his foes: "Are you alone wise and are all others mistaken? Is it likely that so many centuries were all in the wrong? Supposing, on the contrary, you were in the wrong and were leading so many others with you into error and to eternal perdition!"[1] He admits similarly that he had still to fight with his conscience even after having passed through the storm in which, "amidst excitement and confusion of conscience," he had discovered the true doctrine of salvation.[2] That discovery did not bring him into a haven of rest even though we have his word that, for a while, he was quite overcome with joy. "Oh, what great trouble and labour did it cost me, even though grounded on Holy Scripture, to convince my conscience that I had a right to stand up all alone against the Pope, and denounce him as Antichrist, the Bishops as his Apostles and the Universities as his brothels."[3]

The days he spent in the Wartburg and the opportunity they afforded him to look back on his past, awakened anew these self-reproaches; whilst in the solitude, we hear him complaining, that his "distress of soul still persisted and

[1] To the Wittenberg Augustinians, Nov. 1, 1521, in the dedication of his writing "De abroganda missa privata," "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 411 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 116 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 243). Cp. above, vol. ii., p. 79 ff.

[2] "*Furebam ita sæva et perturbata conscientia*," etc. "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 22. Vol. i., p. 388 ff.

[3] From the letter to the Augustinians, p. 411 f.=116.

that his former weakness of spirit and of faith had not yet left him."[1] Later on he remembered having had to battle with every kind of despair ("*omnibus desperationibus*") for three long years.[2] At a much later date, in 1541, he reminds his friends of the many inward struggles ("*tot agones*") the first proclamation of the Evangel and his crusade against the word of man had cost him.[3]

About 1521 he must have arrived at a pitch of "despair and temptation regarding the wrath of God" such as he never before had tasted; for he told one of his pupils, on Dec. 14, 1532, that it was "about ten years since he had felt this struggle so severely; after that better days had dawned, but later the difficulties began anew."[4]

But, as he often admits, he was all too addicted to thoughts of despair, thanks to the devil who was ever lying in wait for him; as for the "better days" they might easily be counted. "When these thoughts come upon me I forget everything about Christ and God, and even begin to look upon God as a miscreant"; the "*Laudate*" stops, so he says, and the "*Blasphemate*" begins as soon as we begin to think of the fate to which from all eternity we are predestined.[5]

Subsequent to 1525 his new state of life with its domestic cares and distractions, added to his satisfaction with the growing damage inflicted on the Papacy, appear to have contributed to diminish his trouble of mind.

Later, however, in 1527, it "began anew."

Atrocious suffering of mind and bitter anxiety concerning the abuses in the new Church—"a vinegar sourer than all other vinegars, as he calls it,"—immediately preceded his illness which began about July 7, 1527.[6] Mental uneasiness and self-reproaches accompanied the fainting-fits which at that time seemed to

[1] To Melanchthon, May 26, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 163.

[2] Khummer (1539), in Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 36: "*per totum triennium laboravi omnibus desperationibus.*" The reading "*omnibus desperantibus*" is excluded by what follows: "*scripserunt quidam ad me fratres ad constantiam me adhortantes.*"

[3] To Link, Sep. 8, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 399.

[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 9.

[5] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 205. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 80. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 160 f.

[6] "*Acetissimum mihi acetum,*" speaking of the rapacity of the despoilers of the churches and of the use of church property for purely private purposes. To Spalatin, Jan. 1, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 3. On this illness, see below, vol. vi., xxvi., 1.

threaten his life. His inward struggles were so severe that Bugenhagen, who tried to comfort him, compares them with the darkness of the soul "so frequently mentioned in the Psalms as illustrative of the spiritual pangs of hell." "Dr. Martin," writes the latter, who was pastor at Wittenberg and Luther's "confessor," "had in all likelihood been through other such temptations, but none had ever been so severe; this he admitted on the following day to Dr. Jonas, to Dr. Christian [Schurf] and to me. He said they were worse and more dangerous than the bodily ailment which befell him on that same Saturday evening about five o'clock and which was so serious that we feared he would succumb under it." Luther himself, in those critical days, declared "that he would not retract his doctrine," and, after making his confession to Bugenhagen as the latter relates, "spoke at considerable length of the spiritual temptation he had been through the same morning, with such fear and trembling as could not be described in words."[1] It was then that the curious complaint was involuntarily wrung from him that those who saw his outward behaviour fancied he "lay on a bed of roses, though God knew how it stood with him." Bugenhagen and Jonas have embellished their accounts of this illness of their friend with many pious utterances supposed to have been spoken by him then.[2]

The Height of the Storm, 1527–28

The worst struggles, lasting over many months, followed upon Luther's illness of 1527.

Hardly had he recovered his normal health than we find his letters full of sad allusions to his abiding state of despair and to his fears concerning the faith, probably the most melancholy outpourings of his whole life.

"For more than a week I have been tossed about between death and hell," he writes to Melanchthon, "so that I still tremble in every limb and feel utterly broken. Waves and storms of despair and blasphemy against God broke over me and I lost Christ almost entirely. But, at the intercession of the saints [his friends] God has begun to take pity on me and has delivered my soul from the lowest hell."[3]—"This struggle," he

[1] "Luthers Werke," Walch ed., 21, appendix, p. 158*, from the Latin. Best rendered in the original Latin text in O. Vogt, "Briefwechsel Bugenhagens," 1888, p. 64 ff.

[2] Cp. the account of Jonas, "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 160 *sqq.*, and better still, Kawerau, "Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, 1884–85, p. 104 ff. The account begins: "*Cum mane, ut ipse fatebatur nobis, habuisset grandem tentationem spiritualem et tamen utcunque ad se rediisset.*" Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 109: "*Dixit* (*Lutherus*) *hesternam tentationem spiritualem duplo fuisse maiorem, quam hanc ægritudinem ad vesperam subsecutam.*"

[3] Aug. 2, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 71: "*Agebar fluctibus et*

writes to Justus Menius, "goes beyond my strength. . . . I am tried not only in body but still more, and worst of all, in soul. God allows Satan and his angels thus to torment me."[1]

In a letter of Aug. 21, addressed to Johann Agricola, then still his friend, he informed him that the fight was not yet at an end. "Satan rages against me with all his might. Like another Job [Job xvi. 12), God has set me up as a mark, and He tempts me with intolerable weakness of spirit. The prayers of holy men indeed save me from remaining in his hands, but the wounds I have received in my heart will be hard to heal. I trust that my strivings will turn to the salvation of many." He concludes by saying that those in power (the Catholics) were unable to get at him, but that so much the more was he plagued in spirit "by the Prince of this world."[2] He writes in much the same vein on Aug. 26 to Nicholas Hausmann.

Truly, so he again wrote to Johann Agricola, on Aug. 31, "neither world nor reason can understand how hard it is to realise that Christ is our righteousness, so deeply rooted in us is the doctrine of works, which has grown up with us and become part of us. That Christ may strengthen me I commend myself to your prayers."[3] Hence it was his chief dogma, the very rock of his Evangel, that "Satan" was then tampering with. The call for good works was, as he felt, beyond even his power to deny.

"For wellnigh three months I have been feeling wretched," he wrote on Oct. 8, "not so much in body as in soul, so that I have written little or nothing, so greatly has Satan tossed me in the sieve [Luke xxii. 31]"[4]—"God has not yet completely restored me to health," he announces on Oct. 19, "but in His wisdom leaves me a prey to Satan who assails me and buffets me; but God also sends help and protection."[5]

He speaks of himself, on Oct. 27, as "a wretched and abject worm, harassed by the spirit of sadness," "I seek and thirst for nought else than for a gracious God, for as such He reveals Himself even to His enemies and contemners."[6] Luther had claimed, that, through his new doctrine and through flinging aside his monkish frock he had found "a gracious God," and proclaimed Him to men for their reconciliation; this has been extolled as the greatest gain achieved by the Lutheran schism; yet here we have his word for it that the solace of a Gracious God was still withheld from him.—"I have always been in the habit of comforting others," he says in a letter to Amsdorf on Nov. 1; "and now I myself stand in desperate need of such consolation; only one thing, however, do I wish, viz. never to be the foe of Christ, although I have offended Him by many and great sins.

procellis desperationis et blasphemiae. . . . Deus eruit animam meam de inferno inferiori" (Ps. lxxxv. 13).

[1] Aug. 12, 1527, *ib.*, p. 73, "*Agon iste meus*," etc.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 78.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 84 f.

[4] To Michael Stiefel, *ib.*, p. 104.

[5] To Justus Jonas, *ib.*, p. 106.

[6] To Melanchthon, *ib.*, p. 110: "*cum aliud non quæram aut sitiam quam propitium Deum.*"

Satan tries to make a Job of me; he would like to sift me like Peter and his brethren. Oh, that God would say to him: 'Yet spare his life' [Job ii. 6], and to me: 'I am thy salvation' [Ps. xxxiv. 3]. Even now I still hope that His anger at my sins will not last for ever. . . . Meanwhile fighting goes on outside and fears reign within, yea, very bitter ones indeed."[1]

Thus in spite of everything he tries to buoy himself up with hope.

Yet his lamentations continue. "Hardly can I breathe for storms and faintheartedness. . . . My Katey, however, is strong in faith and in good health. . . . As for me, my body is whole but I am tempted" (Nov. 4).[2]—"From several sides at once fears rush in on me. My temptations torment me . . . for months storms and faintness of spirit have never left me; pray that my faith may not fail" (Nov. 7).—"I have surely troubles enough already, please do not add to them by crucifying me with your dissensions" (Nov. 9).—"Erasmus and the Sacramentarians are now come to stamp me under foot, to persecute a man already utterly worn out in spirit!"[3]—"I endure God's wrath because I have sinned against Him. My sins, death, and Satan with his angels all rage against me without a break; and now Pope and Emperor, Princes, Bishops and the whole world too storms in upon me, making common cause with the crew who vex me"; everything would be endurable provided only Christ—for Whose sake he, the "most abject of all sinners," was hated—did not desert one "whom God has smitten"[4] and whom they persecute (Nov. 10).—"I believe that it is no mere fiend from the ranks of the devil's hosts who fights with me, but the Prince of the demons himself; so powerful is he and so armed to the teeth with Bible-texts that my knowledge of the Bible is left stranded and I am obliged to have recourse to the words of others; from this you may get some idea of the devil's height, as they say" (Nov. 17).

"I am well in body, but as to how it stands with me in spirit I am not certain. . . . I seek only for a gracious Christ. . . . Satan wants to prevent me from writing and to drag me down with him to hell. May Christ tread him under foot, Amen!" (Nov. 22).[5]

His work and his doctrine must, according to him, be pleasing to heaven; the difficulties and the attacks from without and from within, all these he attributes to Satan's raging and sees in

[1] *Ib.*, p. 111. 2 Cor. vii. 5: "*Foris pugnæ, intus timores*"; Luther: "*pavores.*"

[2] To Jonas, *ib.*, p. 113. He, however, has a joke even here at the expense of Bugenhagen, who was then staying in his house: "*Salutat te Pomeranus, hodie cacator purgandus factus.*"

[3] Cp. Ps. cviii. 17: "*compunctum corde mortificare.*" Luther, quoting from memory, says: "*contritum corde ad mortificandum.*"

[4] "*Novissimus omnium hominum.*" Cp. Ps. liii. 3: "*novissimus virorum,*" of the Messias; 1 Cor. iv. 9: "*novissimos ostendit,*" of the Apostles.—"*Quem Deus percussit, persequuntur*"; cp. Ps. lxviii. 27.

[5] For the letters quoted, see "Briefwechsel," under the dates given.

them proofs "that our word is the Word of God; this alone it is that makes him so furious against us" (Dec. 30).—It has been said that Luther held fast to this with a "bold faith"; it would, however, be more correct to say that he catches at such thoughts as a drowning man does at a straw, a phenomenon which of itself throws a lurid light on his delusions and the misty trend of his thoughts. He is determined to be sure of his cause—and at this very time, with the help of the State, he has a Coburg Zwinglian put to silence, because the latter "neither is nor can be sure of his cause."[1]

"I myself am weak and in wretchedness," he again confesses. "If only Christ does not forsake me. . . . Satan expends his fury on me because I have attacked him by deed, and word, and writing; but I feel consoled when I boldly believe ('*fortiter credo*') that what I did was pleasing to the Lord and to His Christ. I am tossed about between the two warring princes [Christ and Satan] till all my bones are sore. Many works of Satan have I done and still do, nevertheless I hope to please my Christ Who is merciful and inclined to forgive; but from Satan I desire no forgiveness for what I have done against him and for Christ. He is a murderer and the father of lies. . . . I feel in the depths of my soul how, with unbelievable wrath, he plots against me, assuming even the guise of Christ, to say nothing of that of the angel of light" (Nov. 27, 1527).—The "guise of Christ" and of the "angel of light," to which he here alludes, are sufficient to show those who look below the surface that what was troubling him was something not very different from the inner voice of conscience.

How far he could go in deluding himself the better to appease his conscience is plain from what he says in his letter "to the Christians at Erfurt": During the whole time he had spent at Erfurt in his Catholic days he had longed in vain to hear "a Gospel or even a little Psalm"; there, as was everywhere the case in Popery, Holy Scripture lay buried deep, and "no one had even thought of preaching a really Christian sermon."[2]

No less vain than this consolation from the past was that which he sought in the future. He clung wildly to his delusion that the end of all was at hand; "Satan," he cries, "has but a short respite before being completely overthrown, therefore does he make such furious and incredible efforts" (Dec. 31).

"Now that the Word is preached Satan plainly comes off second best; hence he persecutes me secretly; he is unchained, and, with all his engines he seeks to tear Christ from me." Thus on Nov. 28).—"I am the wretched 'off-scourings of Christ'" (Nov. 29).—"I am to all intents and purposes dead, as the Apostle calls it, yet still I live" (Dec. 10).

[1] To the Elector Johann of Saxony, Jan. 16, 1528, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 215 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 195).

[2] Jan. or Feb., 1527, "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 15; Erl. ed., 53, p. 412 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 15).

The long and terrible year was drawing to a close. He had almost grown accustomed to his inward troubles. "I have not yet shaken off my temptation, nor do I desire to be free if it is to God's glory. The devil rages against me simply because Christ has vanquished him through me, his most wretched of vessels" (Dec. 14).—"Well in body, in soul I am as Christ wills, to Whom I am now bound only by a slender thread. The devil on the other hand is moored to me with mighty cords, nay, real cables; he drags me down into the depths, but the weak Christ has still the upper hand owing to your prayers, or at least He puts up a brave fight" (Dec. 29).

The Trouble Continues

Even his lectures on the 1st Epistle of St. John testify to Luther's inward excitement during that unhappy year (1527). The Preface to the commentary as preserved in the Vatican MS. (Palat., 1825) is dated Aug. 19, and begins: "You know that we are so placed by God in this life as to be exposed to all the darts of Satan. And not Satan alone storms against us, but also the world, and our heart, and our flesh. Hence we must despair of peace so long as we remain here below. Against all these evils God has given us no other weapon than His Word which He commands us to preach, who live in the midst of wolves. . . . Thus, since we are exposed to all these dangers, to death, sin, heretics and the whole might of Satan, I have undertaken to expound this Epistle."

Amidst all this inward woe there was a cheerier side of things to look at. A little daughter had been born to him at the end of 1527. He and his family had happily been spared by the plague. He had succeeded in imposing silence on most of his opponents among the preachers of the new faith. His sovereign too was more than ever resolved to support him in his work. In the German lands, and even beyond, the Evangel was daily gaining new ground. Hence there was every reason for self-gratulation. In spite of all this what he says to his friends retains a tone of bitterness and apprehension: "Help me in my agony!" "At times indeed the temptation becomes less severe, but then again it overwhelms me more relentlessly than before" (Dec. 30).—"We are all well excepting Luther himself, who, though he feels well in body, is tormented outwardly by the whole world and inwardly by the devil and all his angels." "Satan gnashes his

teeth furiously all around us" (Dec. 31).—"I have been well acquainted with such temptations from my youth upwards, but that they could assume such dimensions I had never dreamed. Christ holds His own with the utmost difficulty, yet so far He has been victorious. I commend myself to your prayers and those of your brethren. I have saved others and cannot save myself. Praised be my Christ," he adds, convinced in spite of all that he was in the right, "praised be He in the midst of despair, death and blasphemy. . . . It is our glory to have lived in the world agreeably with the will of Christ, forgetful of our former very evil life. Let it suffice that Christ is our life and our righteousness, though this is indeed a hard truth and one which the flesh knows not. It is a bitter chalice that I must drink as the end of the world draws nigh" (Jan. 1, 1528).

After this sad New Year's letter Luther's complaints of his pains of soul cease for a while, though, not long after, they reappear at intervals in an even more startling form.

That bodily sickness was not entirely responsible is clear from his frequent allusions to his good state of health even during such spells of stress; in the end, too, he got the better of these fears, not as the result of any improvement in bodily health, but thanks to the defiant spirit with which he clung to what he deemed was his Divine mission. Everybody knows how much a forceful will is able to do, even in the profoundest depths of the soul. Nevertheless the unhappy victory he ultimately succeeded in gaining over his own self has a right to be accounted something quite out of the common, something of which few in his position would have been capable. Hardly ever has a man had such Titanic forces at his disposal as Luther. He neither could nor would go back, the gap was already too wide; the inward voices spoke in vain which urged him to put away the "hard truth" of the doctrine he had discovered, and to return to the Church which he had spurned.

On the contrary, quite in his own fashion, he declared, on Jan. 27, 1528, that "he was determined still further to provoke Satan, who was raging against him with the utmost fury," and thus make an end once for all of his struggles and fears. "But after I am dead," so he begs his friends, "then do you who survive me avenge me on Satan and his apostles" (Jan. 6).

In the same year, on the strength of his own experience, he gave his friend Wenceslaus Link detailed directions for

those followers of the Evangel who are "tempted in faith and hope." They are to make the "greatest efforts" against the devil who is so plainly to be discerned; they are to build blindly on the certainty that all thoughts to the contrary are mere devil's treason. Further, they are to cling to the Word of a good man as to a voice from God in Heaven, just as he himself had often found strength by revolving in mind Bugenhagen's simple words: "You must not despise our consolation."[1] Luther seems to have sent Link several such letters on the means of escaping from "despair."[2] He knew only too well the fears which many underwent in the new Evangel.[3]

"Our conscience tells us," so he says in one of his sermons, "I am a sinner, it goes ill with me, and this I have richly deserved. Then the conscience begins to quake and says: It will not be well with me when I die. Such is fear of death."[4]

The return of his friends to Wittenberg in 1528 and social intercourse with his own circle gradually changed his frame of mind. He was very susceptible to the influence of cheerful conversation and to the exhilarating effects of drink. The new and important tasks which confronted him also tended to take his mind from the trouble that reigned within him.

"My Satan," he was able to write on Feb. 25, 1528, "is now rather more bearable; your prayers are taking effect."[5]

But, in the following year (1529), it became apparent that the storm was not yet over. As early as Feb. 12 he again asks his friend Amsdorf for the help of his prayers that he may not "be delivered into Satan's hand."[6]—Curiously enough, on the very day that the famous Protest of Spires was made (April 19, 1529), Luther was again passing through one of the worst bouts of his "wrestling with the devil"; he poured out his heart and conscience to his friend Jonas: If it was really an apostolic attribute to be

[1] July 14, 1528, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 300.
[2] Cp. the letter to Link of March 7, 1529, *ib.*, 7, p. 63.
[3] Cp. vol. iii., p. 218 ff.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19^2, p. 350 f., Sermon on Rom. viii. 31 (1537).
[5] To Link, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 214.
[6] "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 52: "*ut Dominus non me deserat in manu Satanæ.*"

"in deaths often" (2 Cor. xi. 23) then indeed he was in this respect a "very Peter or Paul"; but, unfortunately, he had other less apostolic qualities, "qualities better fitting robbers, publicans, whores and sinners."[1]—Elsewhere he indeed compares himself with the Apostle Peter, but with Peter while still weak in the faith and wavering, as he was before the descent of the Holy Ghost: "Though I feel fairly well in body yet I am weak in the spirit, and, like Peter's, my faith is shaky"[2] (July 31).

When he wrote this he had already consented to take part in the Marburg Conference with Zwingli. We already know how, outwardly at least, he triumphed over Zwingli at Marburg; yet, when returning home in good health and spirits, the "temptations" suddenly came upon him again at Torgau in Oct., 1529, with such violence, that he admitted he had "only with difficulty ('*vix et ægre*') continued his journey to Wittenberg, after having given up all hope of again seeing his family."[3] Very likely apprehension of danger from the Turks contributed to this. He himself says: "It may be that, by this combat ('*agon*'), I myself am doing my bit in enduring and conquering the Turk, or at least his god, viz. the devil."[4] Just before this, however, and on this very journey home, he had composed the so-called Articles of Schwabach, which contain not a trace of his doubts and self-reproaches, but, on the contrary, are full of that firm defiance which characterises his other writings. They insist most strongly on his views as against those of both Zwinglians and Catholics.

Before reaching Torgau Luther preached several sermons, including one at Erfurt.

Outbursts and Relief

At Erfurt, as though to relieve his fears, Luther stormed against the Evangelical fanatics, and likewise against the monks and the holy-by-works. Maybe the sight of the town where he had passed his youth set him thinking of the

[1] *Ib.*, p. 87.

[2] To Johann Brismann at Riga, *ib.*, p. 139. On the extraordinary states and temptations of certain Saints which some have likened to Luther's "temptations," see below, vol. vi., xxxv., 5, at the end.

[3] To Link, Oct. 28, 1529, *ib.*, p. 179 f. On the Marburg Conference, see vol. iii., p. 381 f.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 180. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 180.

zealous and peaceful years he had spent in the monastery and thus added to his sense of disquiet. Nor was this the first time that his anger had gushed forth on Erfurt in one of those outbursts by which he was wont to forestall the reproaches of his conscience.

One such eruption of an earlier date may serve as an instance of the fits of rage to which he was liable when battling with his temptations.

The Erfurt Evangelicals had failed to silence the Franciscan preacher, Dr. Conrad Kling. That this valiant friar, the ablest priest at Erfurt and a powerful pulpit orator, should continue to attract large crowds, annoyed Luther exceedingly. In his writing to the "Christians at Erfurt" of Jan. or Feb., 1527, he invoked "God's anger and judgments" upon them and threatened all with Christ's warnings against "Capharnaum, Chorozain and Bethsaida" unless at the order of their Councillors they expelled the preacher and in this way safeguarded the "great fulness and wealth of the Word" which he himself had proclaimed to them. Satan, verily, was not asleep in their midst, as they could very well see from the working of that "doctor of darkness," the shameless monk.[1]

Kling, who was much esteemed by the Catholics, and was seeking to save the last remnants of the faithful, was pictured by the fanatism of his furious opponent as a glaring example of that most dreadful of all sins, viz. the sin against the Holy Ghost. Now that the world, by the preaching of the Evangel, has been delivered from the lesser sins of "blindness, error and darkness," so Luther told the people of Erfurt, "why do we rage with the other sin against the Holy Ghost and provoke God's wrath to destroy us in time and for all eternity? God will not forgive this sin, nor can He endure it; there is no need to say more." "When they start wantonly fighting against the plain, known truth, then there is no further help or counsel."[2]

Such action can only be explained by a quite peculiar mental state. Boundless irritation, probably not unconnected with his struggles of conscience, combined with a positive infatuation for his own ideas, was the cause of the following outbursts, which almost remind us of the ravings of a maniac.

In 1528, in the preface to a book of Klingenbeyl, he inveighs against the celibacy of the clergy: "They are devils in human skins and so are all who knowingly and wilfully hold with them." "Amongst themselves they are the worst of all whoremongers, adulterers, women-stealers and girl-spoilers, so that their shameless record of sins fills the heaven and the earth." Their wicked-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 13; Erl. ed., 53, p. 411 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 15). Cp. the article on Kling by N. Paulus, "Katholik," 1892, 1, p. 146 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 322; Erl. ed., 63, p. 259, in the Preface to the work of Justus Menius against Conrad Kling: "Etlicher gottloser Lere . . . Verlegung," etc., 1527.

ness is matched only by their stupidity. "The people [the Papists] have become a Pope-Ass, so that they are and remain donkeys however much we may boil them, roast them, flay them, turn them over, baste them, or break them; all they can do is abuse Luther. . . . And because I have driven them to Scripture and they can neither understand nor make use of it, God help us what a wild bawling and outcry I have caused. Here one howls about the sacrament under one kind, there another bellows against the marriage of the clergy; one shrieks about the Mass, and another yells about good works." "The vermin and the ugly crew I have rounded up understands not a bit even its own noise and howling." "Hence you may see how they love justice, viz. their own tyranny."

To the measure of their viciousness, stupidity and obstinacy must be added vulgar impudence of the worst sort: "They shamelessly and scandalously relieve themselves of their filth in front of all the world." "Such rude fellows remind me of a coarse clod-hopper who would ease himself in the marketplace before everyone, all the while pointing to a house where a little child is modestly and privily relieving nature, and who would imagine that he had thereby excused himself and provoked everybody to laugh at the child." "Ought not such rascals to be hunted down with hounds and driven out with rods. . . . Let them go, blind leaders of the blind that they are! God's endless wrath has come upon them so that now they can no longer see anything."[1]

According to recent research it is to this trying time of inward conflict, after his recovery from his illness in 1527, that Luther's famous Hymn "A safe stronghold our God is still" ("Ein' feste Burg") belongs. This "great hymn of the evangelical community," as Köstlin termed it, proclaims, in the words of the Psalmist, that God is the strong bulwark and sure refuge of Luther's cause.

"The ancient Prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of Craft and Power
He weareth in this hour,
On Earth is not his fellow.

. . . . . .

And were this world all devils o'er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore,
Not they can overpower us.

. . . . . .

God's Word, for all their craft and force,
Shall not one moment linger."[2]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 530 ff.; Erl. ed., 63, p. 271.

[2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 56, p. 343 f. Cp. below, xxxiv., 4. [We give it above in Carlyle's rendering, "Miscellanies," "Luther's Psalm."]

"This hymn came from the very bottom of his heart," says Köstlin, "being written with a bold faith under stress of temptation." The first trace of the hymn is now believed to be found in a recently discovered Leipzig hymn-book, which is supposed to be a reprint of the Wittenberg "Gesangbüchlein" of 1528, in which this hymn may have figured.[1]

A Protestant researcher, P. Tschackert, has pointed out, that, in that same year (1528), the Wittenbergers went in fear of an attack on the Evangelicals by the Catholic Estates. Luther's attitude towards the supposed menace, intensified as it was by his inward struggles about that time, calls for some further remarks.

The alleged disclosures of Otto von Pack to the Landgrave of Hesse concerning the secret plans of the Catholics to dethrone the Protestant Princes by force of arms had proved to be a mere fabrication.[2] Luther, nevertheless, stormed against the Duke of Saxony who was supposed to be implicated most deeply in the business. He wrote: "Duke George is a foe of my doctrine, hence he rages against the Word of God; I must therefore believe he rages against God Himself and His Christ. But if he rages against God, then, privily, I must believe him to be possessed of the devil. If he is possessed of the devil, then in my heart I must believe that he cherishes the worst of intentions."[3] Thanks to such dialectics, Luther again formulates the charges embodied in the Pack disclosures. As Tschackert points out, Luther persisted in crediting his opponents with all that was worst.

In 1528 he preached on John xvii.; in the tone of these sermons, printed in 1530, we find several remarkable echoes of Luther's hymn "Ein' feste Burg."[4]

The preacher speaks to his hearers both of inward temptations and of outward hardships, and uses words which recall, now his complaints of his experiences with the devil, now the trustful defiance he voices in his hymn on the "Safe stronghold."

"We must know that there is no way of resisting the devil's temptations than by holding fast to the plain word of Scripture

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, pp. 177, 646.

[2] Cp. vol. iii., pp. 48 f., 325 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 41; Erl. ed., 31, p. 20. "Von heimlichẽ und gestolen Brieffen," 1529.

[4] P. Tschackert, "Die Entstehung des Lutherliedes 'Ein' feste,'" etc. ("Theol. Literaturblatt," 1905, No. 2, and before, in the "N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1903, Hft. 10).

and not thinking or speculating further. . . . Whoever does not do this will be disappointed, and err, and have a fall."[1] If you do not simply believe in the Word, he repeats to the people, you will "rush in headlong and be overthrown; for the devil is able to persuade our heart that he is God, and to disguise himself in great splendour and majesty"; "in the assumption of prudence, holiness and majesty no one in the world excels him"; "hence no one can cheat him better than by tying himself to the tree where God has placed him; otherwise, if he seizes you, you are lost and he will carry you off as the hawk does the chick from under the wing of the clucking hen."[2]

In the same sermon, however, he also prophesies the shame and destruction of "our wrathful foes who seek to stifle the Evangel and to stamp out the Christians, many of whom they have already burned and murdered; for even prouder kings and lords—in comparison with whom our princes and lords are the merest beggars[3]—have come to grief over the Evangel and been wrecked by it." Speaking of the Catholic princes headed by the Emperor Charles V, he exclaims: "Our furious tyrants, when they abuse the Evangel, and persecute, murder and burn all our people are termed Christian princes, and defenders of the Church; this exonerates whatever shameful and wicked practices they may commit against both God and man."[4]

Again he extols the Word, making Christ say: "I have given them the Word whereby Thy Name has been made known to them" ("Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn," as the original of the hymn runs); "but neither the Papacy nor any other fanatics will accept it," i.e. the knowledge of Christ; "for this reason we are forced unceasingly to wrangle, grapple and fight with them and the devil."[5] Still, "all our protection, our redemption from sin, death, the world and the devil's power is comprised in the Word alone"; holding fast to this we have all the prophets, martyrs, apostles and the whole of Christendom on our side. But Christendom is a "powerful lady, Empress of heaven and earth, at whose feet devil, world, death and hell must fall as soon as she drops a word." "For," so he continues, thinking of himself, "who can check or harm a man who has so defiant a spirit?" "Whether the devil attacks singly a weak member of Christendom and fancies he has gobbled him up [cp. the use of this same word below, p. 347] or even Christendom as a whole," he must nevertheless "tremble and fall to the ground." "If a sin attacks him [the Christian], and seeks to affright, gnaw, and oppress his conscience and threaten him with devil, death and hell, then God and His multitude [the saints and angels] will say: 'Good sin, let him be; death, do not slay him; hell, do not swallow him!'"[6]

[1] Exposition of John xvii., "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 91; Erl. ed., 50, p. 174. [2] *Ib.*, p. 137=213. [3] *Ib.*, p. 85 f.=169.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 159 f.=233 f. [5] *Ib.*, p. 199=264.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 182 ff.=252 f.

"But here faith comes in," he at once goes on, "for, to the eyes of the world and to reason, everything seems just the reverse." ["And were the world all devils o'er," sings the hymn on the "Safe stronghold."]

The outside menace from the Papists and their princes, and the inward, "sudden, baneful attacks of the devil in our conscience," Luther writes in his interpretation of John xviii. (v. 28), all "this is written to put to blush our high-priests and elders, viz. the bishops and princes who go about the world with noses in the air as though they were pious and holy, whereas they drive out of their land the pious, God-fearing Christians and preachers. Who in the devil's name gave them power to pass judgment on the teaching of the Evangel?" But the devil, too, persecutes us with his machinations. "When he finds some poor conscience that would fain be pious, he attacks it with trifles. . . . Amongst us Evangelicals there is not one who has not great, big sins and difficulties, such as doubts, and waverings in the faith, and other awkward knots. But such big sins and great difficulties the devil is willing to discard while he attacks us about some paltry thing . . . and torments and plagues our conscience." But when thereby we are "upset and become troubled" we ought to "console ourselves and say: 'If Our Lord God can have patience with me even though my faith in Him be not firm, but often wavering and doubtful, why then do you torment me, you devil, with other petty matters and sins? I can see through all your artfulness and wicked malice; you cloak over the great sins and big difficulties so that I may not heed them, or make any conscience of them, nor seek forgiveness for them. . . .' Therefore a Christian must learn not to allow himself to be too easily troubled with remorse of conscience; but if he believes in Christ, wishes to be pious, strives against sin as far as he is able and yet occasionally makes mistakes, stumbles and falters, he must not allow such stumbling to upset him in conscience, but rather he must say: Away with this error and this stumbling! Let it join my other faults and crimes and be included among the other sins of which the Creed teaches us the forgiveness."[1]

The further course of Luther's inner history will show more clearly how far the article of the forgiveness of sins served its purpose in his own case and how he contrived to prop up a faith, which, during the years 1527 and 1528, was so distressingly inclined to "doubt and wavering."

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 295 ff.; Erl. ed., 50, p. 328 f.

5. The Ten Years from 1528–38. How to win back Peace of Conscience

The Years Previous to 1537

During the time when the Diet of Augsburg was in preparation Luther's complaints about his inward struggles recede somewhat into the background, outward events engrossing all his attention.

Matters changed, however, when the Diet actually began its sessions and he himself took up his residence in the fortress of Coburg. There he was a prey to overwhelming suffering both of body and of mind.

His nervous ailments, particularly the noises in his head, became much worse at that time, owing partly to his deep concern for his cause, partly to his too great literary output during his sojourn in the solitude. Against his inner anxieties he tried the weapon of humour.[1] But all in vain. The "spiritual temptations" set in, and his loneliness made them even worse. It was at the beginning of May that he received Satan's famous "embassy." Because he had been left quite alone (in the absence of Veit Dietrich and Cyriacus Kaufmann), so he says, Satan had so far got the better of him that he had been obliged to flee from the room and to seek the society of men. When writing to Melanchthon about this he uses some strange-sounding words: "Hardly can I await the day when I shall at last behold the tremendous power of this spirit and his majesty, which, in its kind, is quite divine ('*planeque divinam maiestatem quandam*')."[2] Here he is presumably alluding to the time of his death and of the judgment when he would behold Satan. He had, however, not to wait so long, for, in the following month and while still at the Coburg, he was vouchsafed a glimpse of the Enemy under a certain shape; at least such was his belief; the actual vision will be described later (vol. vi., xxxvi., 3).

He must have suffered grievously from his fears whilst in the castle; he compares himself to the parched country surrounding it, so greatly was he tried inwardly by storms and heat;[3] but "our cause is safe if our Word is true, and

[1] To Spalatin, April 23, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 308. See above, p. 315.

[2] To Melanchthon, May 12, 1530, *ib.*, p. 332 f.

[3] To Jonas, May 19, 1530, *ib.*, p. 338.

that it is true is sufficiently demonstrated by the ferocity and frenzy of our foes."[1] He was visited by thoughts of death, and, during these, he sought, as he related later, the spot in the castle chapel where he would be laid to rest.[2] Then, when his disquiet of mind began to abate, intense bodily weakness again made him think of death; this too, in his opinion, was Satan's doing. When ultimately he left the Coburg he felt himself a broken man and began to sigh more and more over his burden of years, though, as a matter of fact, he was still comparatively young.

Nevertheless, in a letter to Melanchthon of June 29, 1530, he praised the comfort of his place of residence. Above all he was able to report that "the spirit who formerly beat me with fists [in mind] seems to be losing heart."[3] Yet, alluding to his bodily pains, he says sadly: "I fancy that another has taken his [the other tormentor's] place and plagues my body; but I prefer to endure this torture of the body rather than that hangman of the spirit. But he has sworn to have my life, this I feel plainly, and will never stop until he has gobbled me up."[4]

But when he had returned safe and sound to Wittenberg he was disposed to look back with utter horror on what he had gone through, physically and mentally, when at the Coburg. "Now my shoulders are really beginning to feel the weight of my years," he writes to trusty Amsdorf; "and my powers are going. The angel of Satan has indeed dealt hardly with me."[5]

"My thoughts did me more harm than all my work," he said, in May, 1532, speaking of those which came by night ("*curæ nocturnæ*").[6] Nothing, so he says elsewhere, had brought him so nigh to death as these; with them all his labours, to which the great numbers of letters he received bore witness, were not to be compared.[7] To young Schlaginhaufen Veit Dietrich related, as a memory of the Coburg days, how Luther had said to him there: "Were I to die

[1] To Melanchthon, May 15, 1530, *ib.*, p. 335.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 203.
[3] "*Spiritus ille, qui me colaphizavit hactenus.*" Cp. 2 Cor. xii. 7: "*angelus satanæ, qui me colaphizet.*"
[4] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 43.
[5] Oct. 31, 1530, *ib.*, p. 301.
[6] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 87.
[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 374, Oct. 28–Dec. 12, 1536.

now and be cut open, my heart would be found all shrivelled up in consequence of my distress and sadness of spirit."[1]

His having to wrestle with such moods is also in great part responsible for the stormy and extravagant tone of the works he wrote during, or shortly after, his stay at the Coburg.[2]

"*I should have Died without any Struggle*"

In 1537, in his second serious illness, at Schmalkalden, and on the return journey from this town to Wittenberg, Luther displayed the same stubborn spirit as in 1527. In 1537 it was an attack of stone which brought him to the brink of the grave. Later on he himself declared of this crisis, that he would have died quite easily and trustfully. Into his deepest feelings at that time we have, of course, no means of probing, but it may be, that, by dint of persistently repressing his earlier scruples, he had indeed reached the state of calm resignation he depicts. At the same time his great bodily exhaustion will probably have reacted on his spirit, his very weakness thus explaining the silence of the inward voices.

"At Gotha [on my way back]," so he told his friends in 1540, "I was quite certain I was to die; I said good-bye to all, called Bugenhagen, commended to him the Church, the school, my wife and all else, and begged him to give me absolution. . . . Thus I should have died in Christ with a perfectly quiet soul and without a struggle. But the Lord wished to preserve me in life. My '*Catena*' [Katey] too," so he goes on to speak of one of his wife's illnesses, "when once we had already given up all hopes for her life, would have died gladly, and readily, and with a quiet soul; she merely repeated a thousand times over the words: 'In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall not be confounded for ever.'" From such experiences in her case and in his own Luther draws the conclusion, that "at times the devil desists from tempting to blasphemy." "At other times God allows him," so he thinks, "to try us thereby, so that we may not become indolent but may learn to fight. At the end of our life, however, all such temptations cease; for then the Holy Spirit is at the side of the faithful believer, restrains the devil by force and pours into the heart perfect peace and security."[3]

Such was his interpretation of the case.

[1] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*

[2] See above, vol. ii., pp. 391 ff.; vol. iv., pp. 191 ff.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 115, March 21 to June 11, 1540.

At other times Luther expresses wonder at the wrong-headed sectarians who can with such confidence look even death itself in the face. He refuses to apply to them what has just been said; it is no real peace that they die in, rather they are blinded by Satan's delusions. "This new sect of the Anabaptists," he says indignantly, "grows marvellously, they live with a great show [of the spirit] and boldly face death by fire and water."[1] He is thinking of the Anabaptists who were executed in 1527—"May God have mercy on these poor captives of Satan. . . . They cannot be coerced either by fire or by the sword; so greatly does Satan rage in this hour because it is his last." And yet the whole thing was little more than a joke of Satan's.

"With me, however, he certainly does not jest; I believe that I am pleasing to God and displeasing to Satan."[2]

He overlooks the fact that the Anabaptists, too, fancied they were pleasing Christ, nay, were passionately convinced that they were living for Christ and not for Satan; they even exposed themselves of their own accord to the worst torments of the executioner before they passed out of life, obstinately declaring that it was impossible for them to recant. The words in which Luther complains of their obstinacy are a two-edged sword.

He is fond of bewailing the stubbornness of the heretics; it was a subject of wholesome fear for all; it penetrated "like water into their inward parts and like oil into their bones": so far do they go that they see "salvation and blessing" in their own doctrine alone; few are they who "come right again," "the others remain under their own curse." "Neither have I ever read," he assures us, "of any teacher who originated a heresy being converted"; "the true Evangel which teaches the contrary of their doctrine is and always will be to them a devil's thing."[3]—"No heretic," he cries, "will let himself be talked over. . . . A man is soon done for when the devil thus lays hold of him."[4] Such a one boasts that, "he is quite certain of things"; "No Christian ever held so fast to his Christ as a Jew or a fanatic does to his pet doctrine."[5] He also believes his opponent to be a liar "as surely as God is God."[6] And yet, so Luther argues, the sectarian or fanatic can never be certain at all; not one of his gainsayers is sure of his cause; not one has "felt the struggle and been at grips with the devil" like himself.[7]

But I, "I am certain that my word is not mine but the word of Christ," and "every man who speaks the word of Christ is

[1] To Jakob Probst, Dec. 31, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 169.

[2] To Johann Hess, Jan. 27, 1528, *ib.*, p. 199 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 609 f.; Erl. ed., 38, p. 445 f., "Vier trostliche Psalmen" (1526).

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 295. In 1542–43.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 317, Spring, 1543. His statement runs, that "no heresiarch can be converted." "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 262; cp. 23, p. 73; Erl. ed., 30, p. 22.

[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 5.

[7] *Ib.*

free to boast that his mouth is the mouth of Christ."[1]—"Had not the devil attacked us with such power and cunning during all these years," he says in his second exposition of the 1st Epistle of Peter (published in 1539), "we should never have acquired this certainty on doctrine."[2] It is to his awful "temptations," that, as we have heard him repeatedly assure us, he owes the strength of his faith.[3] Unceasingly did he strive to acquire a feeling of strong certainty in defiance of the devil, as indeed his theology demanded: We must by fiducial faith have made our position secure against the devil, otherwise we have no stay at all.[4]

"Even though I stumble yet I am resolved to stand by what I have taught." And, as though to falter in this way was inevitable, he continues: "for although a Christian holds fast until death to his doctrine, yet he often stumbles and begins to doubt; but it is not so with the fanatics, they stand firm."[5] And yet, according to Luther, everyone must "stand firm," for in theology there is no room for "fears and doubts." And we must have certainty concerning God. But in conversing with other men we must be modest and say, 'If anyone knows better let him say so.'"[6]

The "Struggles by Day and by Night" gradually Wane

Hardly had Luther recovered from his second bout of illness than the gloomy thoughts once more emerged from their hiding-place and began again to dog his footsteps, though perhaps not quite so persistently as after his recovery from his previous sickness ten years earlier. It is as though on both occasions the sight of the gaping jaws of death had

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 683; Erl. ed., 22, p. 53. Eyn trew Vormanung," etc. Cp. his outbursts against the "obstinacy of the heretics," "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 37 *sqq.*: "*Temeritas Schwermeriorum pestilentissima est*," etc. P. 40, under the heading: "*Quomodo sit cum fanaticis agendum.*"

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 52, p. 24 f. According to his sermons.

[3] Cp. below, p. 355 f.

[4] "There is only one article and rule in theology, viz. true faith or trust in Christ. . . . The devil has opposed this article from the beginning of the world." "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 398.—"A Christian must be quite convinced that a thing is so and not otherwise . . . so that he may be able to withstand every temptation and stand up to the devil and all his angels, nay, even to God Himself, without wavering." *Ib.*, p. 394.—"Whoever is not sure of his teaching and faith, and yet wishes to dispute, is done for." *Ib.*—"Satan comes to accuse what is best; hence a man must have certainty." "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 221.—"For it is absolutely necessary that consciences should reach certainty and confidence in all matters; if never a doubt remains, then everything wobbles." To N. Hausmann, Dec. 17, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 363.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 317.

[6] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 38.

set free the troubled spirits within, and as though the spell which momentarily restrained his terrors of soul had been loosed as soon as his bodily powers returned. This was the last great attack he had to endure, or at least from this time onward definite allusions to his struggles of conscience are not forthcoming as before.

In 1537 he lay for a fortnight under the stress of that "spiritual malady" (above, p. 319), during which he "disputed with God," was scarcely able to take food, to sleep or to preach, in spite of his "understanding a little" "the Psalter and its consolation," viz. that one must be patient.[1]—On Oct. 7, 1538, he bewails his "daily agony."[2] In the same year he wrings some comfort out of Paul, who also had been unable to "lay hold of" what was right;[3] he also has a poke at the devil: "Why arraign us so sternly before God as though you were quite holy, and the highest judge!"[4]

He then realised in his own person how one thus oppressed with terrors of soul could be tempted, like Job (iii. 1 ff.), to curse the day of his birth. After having, during the night of Aug. 1, 1538, suffered severe pains in the joints of the arm, he said next day, that such pains were tolerable in comparison with others: "The flesh can get used to this sort of thing. But when the spiritual temptations come and the 'Cursed be the day I was born' follows, that is a harder matter. Christ was tried in a similar way in the Garden of Olives . . . He, on account of His temptations, is our best advocate in all temptations. . . . Let us but cling fast to hope!"[5]

It cannot be established that he was speaking seriously or was prompted by despair when he wished that "he had died as a child," nay, "had never been born," and stated that he would gladly see "all his books perish." We must beware of laying too great stress on occasional deliverances spoken in moments of irritation, or on little tricks of speech such as his depreciatory remarks concerning his books.[6]

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 406, March 21–28, 1537. Cp. above, p. 319, n. 1.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 144.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 128, Sep. 10.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 4, Jan. 5.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 106.
[6] See below, p. 369 ff. Cp. the previous passage.

It may be to the purpose to quote here some undated statements of Luther's which paint in lurid style his frequent struggles of mind and his manner of resistance.

Jerome, Augustine and Ambrose had "carnal and childish temptations"; "these are nothing compared with Satan who strikes us, the σκόλοψ, that, as it were, fastens us to the gallows; then Jerome's and the others' child-temptations are chased away entirely."[1]—"On one occasion I was greatly tempted in my garden near the bush of lavender, whereupon I sang the hymn 'Now praise we Christ the Holy One,' otherwise I should have expired on the spot. Hence, when you feel such a thought, say, 'This is not Christ.' . . . This I preach and write, but I am not yet at home in this art when tempted in this way."[2]

The worst temptations of all are those when "one does not know whether God is the devil or the devil God."[3] "The Apostle Judas, when the hour [of temptation] came, walked into the snare and knew not how to get out. But we who have taken the field against him [the devil] and are at grips with him know, by God's grace, how to meet and resist him."[4]—"The devil can affright me to such an extent that in my sleep the sweat breaks out all over me; otherwise I do not trouble about dreams or signs. . . . Sad dreams are the work of the devil. Often has he driven me from prayer and put such thoughts into my head that I have run away; the best fights I have had with him were in my bed by the side of my Katey."[5]

Elsewhere, however, he says: "I have found the nocturnal encounters far harder than the daylight ones"; "but, that Christ is master, this I can show not merely by Holy Scripture but also by experience"; "God gives richly of both. But all has become bitter to me through these temptations."[6]—"I know from my own experience what we read of in the Psalms (vi. 7): 'Every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears.' In my temptations I have often wondered and asked myself whether I had any heart left in my body, so great a murderer is Satan; but he will not long keep the upper hand, for he has indeed burnt his fingers on Christ."[7]

To add to the terrors of such struggles came thoughts of suicide. When Leonard Beyer, an Augustinian, who had become pastor of Guben, spoke to Luther of his temptations to take his own life, and of the voice which occasionally whispered to him "Stick a knife into yourself," Luther answered: "This used to be the same with me. No sooner

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 315. The passage 2 Cor. xii. 7: "*Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ, angelus satanæ, qui me colaphizet,*" is generally taken with St. Thomas to refer to temptations of the flesh.
[2] Khummer in Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," p. 73 f. In 1539.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 197.
[4] *Ib.*, 58, p. 286.
[5] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 49.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 97.
[7] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 39, Jan. to March, 1532.

did I take a knife in my hand, than such thoughts came to me; nor could I kneel down to pray without the devil driving me out of the room. We have to suffer from the great devils, the '*theologiæ doctores*'; but the Turks and Papists have only the little devils" to tempt them.[1] It would indeed be no wonder if Luther in his excited frame of mind was for a while troubled by such thoughts of suicide. By thoughts of the sort sufferers of gloomy disposition are often tormented quite involuntarily and without any fault of their own. It is hardly worth our while to prove that another passage, which occurs in Cordatus, is not at all to the point though it has been quoted against Luther as showing his inclination to suicide. There, in his usual vein of exaggeration, he says that he "would hang himself on the nearest tree" were Satan to succeed in dragging down Christ from heaven. Surely there was just as little likelihood of his being his own hangman as of the enemy succeeding in this.[2] And yet some Catholic polemists who believed in the fable that Luther killed himself, seized on such passages in order to show that Luther had long been bent on suicide.

How to find Peace of Conscience

If, towards the end of the 'thirties, Luther was more successful in countering his inward anxieties, this may have been due to the means he used and the efficacy of which he frequently extols. Some of the remedies to which he had recourse appear comparatively innocent, and had even been recommended by Catholic spiritual writers to be used when the circumstances demanded. Others, however, must be described as doubtful and even dangerous, particularly considering what his moral position was.

Above all he recommends distraction; people tempted should engage in cheerful intercourse, or in games; in his own case he had urgently desired the return of his friends, "in order that Satan may no longer rejoice that we are so far apart."[3] He also bears witness to the improvement which resulted from cheerful, animated conversation.

[1] *Ib.*, p. 214. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 60. Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 213 f. Leonard Beyer had defended Luther's Theses as a young Augustinian at the Heidelberg Disputation in 1518.

[2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 129.

[3] To Jonas, Dec. 30, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 167.

He also advises people to awaken some " stronger emotion so as to counteract the disquieting thoughts.[1] For instance, it is a good thing " to break out into scolding,"[2] or to give vent to a " brave outburst of anger."[3]

Further, animal pleasures are, according to him, of advantage ; he himself, on his own admission, sought to distract his thoughts by sensual joys of the most material kind.[4] In the case of gloomy thoughts " a draught of beer " was, so he avers, of much greater use than, e.g. astrology.[5]

Sensuality, however, is not always sufficiently powerful or effective. It is better to have recourse from the beginning to religious remedies. " If I but seize the Scripture [text] I have gained the day,"[6] but, unfortunately, the verse wanted often won't come. In general, what is required is prayer, much patience and the arousing of confidence.[7] One's patience may be fortified by the thought that " perhaps, thanks to these temptations, I shall become a great man," as he himself had actually become, thanks largely to his temptations.[8]

Further, the words of " great and learned men to one who is tempted may serve him as an oracle or prophecy, which indeed they may really be."[9] To hold fast to a single word spoken by a stranger had often proved very helpful. We may recall how he compared Bugenhagen's words to him : " You must not despise our consolation," to " a voice from heaven."[10] Another saying of his same friend and confessor, had, so he declares, greatly strengthened him. "'Surely enough, God thinks : ' What more can I do for this man [Luther] ? I have given him such excellent gifts and yet he despairs of my grace ! "[11]

In these " temptations," whether in his own case or in that

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 450: "*aliquis vehementior affectus.*" Vol. iii., p. 174, n. 1.

[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 69, p. 129 ; above, vol. iv., p. 311.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 515.

[4] Cordatus, " Tagebuch," p. 450. " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 299. To Hier. Weller, July (?), 1530, " Briefwechsel," 8, p. 160. Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichn.," p. 11. See vol. iii., p. 175 ff.

[5] From Veit Dietrich's MS. Notes, in Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 516.

[6] Mathesius, " Aufzeichn.," p. 97.

[7] To Wenceslaus Link, July 14, 1528, " Briefwechsel," 6, p. 301.

[8] To Hier. Weller, July (?) 1530, *ib.*, 8, p. 160. [9] *Ib.*

[10] To Wenceslaus Link, in the passage quoted under n. 7 ; above, p. 339.

[11] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 176, from Veit Dietrich.

of others, he hardly gives a thought to penance and mortification, such as olden Churchmen had always recommended and employed. On the contrary, ascetic remedies of the sort would, according to him, only make things worse. Needless to say, even Catholics were anxious that such remedies should not be applied without discretion, since lessening of the bodily powers might conceivably weaken the resistance of the spirit, nay, even promote fears and temptations. Luther says, in 1531: "Were I to follow my inclination I should [when in this state] go three days without eating anything. This then is a double fasting, to eat and drink without the least appetite. When the world sees it, it looks on it as drunkenness, but God will judge whether it is drunkenness or fasting. They will have fasts, but not as I fast. Therefore keep head and belly full. Sleep also helps."[1] Sleep seemed to him especially important, not merely as a condition for hard work, but also to enable one to resist low spirits. It was when unable to sleep, that, as he tells us, "the devil had annoyed him until he said: '*Lambe mihi nates*,' etc. We have the treasure of the Word; God be praised."[2]

His practice and teaching with regard to inward sources of troubles were indeed miles apart from those of earlier Catholic times, and even from what in his own day Catholic masters of the first rank in the spiritual life had written for the benefit of posterity. Everybody knows how these writers are, above all, desirous to provide their readers with a method whereby they may discern between, on the one hand, the voice of conscience, whether it warns us to desist from wrong or encourages us to do what is good, and, on the other, the promptings of the Evil Spirit. They say that it is the devil's practice alternately to disquiet and to cheer, though in a way very different from that of the spirits from above. It was unfortunate for Luther that he chose to close his eyes to any such "discerning of the spirits." He resolutely steeled his conscience once for all against even wholesome disquietude and anxiety, and of set purpose he bore down all misgivings. Of one thing he was determined to be convinced: "Above all hold fast to this, that thoughts

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 11, Nov. to Dec., 1531. Same in Veit Dietrich. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 47.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*

bad and sad come, not from God, but from the devil;" "make it your wont at once to tell all inward reproaches: 'You were not sent by God.'"

"At first," he adds, as though describing his own case, "this struggle is hard, but practice makes it easier."[1]

He claimed that, owing to the amount of practice he had had in inward combats, his "faith had been much strengthened"; the "temptations" had won for him a "wealth of Divine gifts," had taught him humility and qualified him for his task, nay, had set a Divine seal on his mission;[2] his "*theologia*" he had learnt in the school of the devil's temptations; without such a devil to help, one remains a mere speculative theologian.[3]

Such sayings lead us to ask whether his life of faith really underwent a strengthening as he advanced in years.

6. Luther on his Faith, his Doctrine and his Doubts, particularly in his Later Years

Whoever would judge correctly of the remarkable statements made by Luther which we are now about to consider must measure them, at least in the lump, by the standard of his doctrine on faith. If anything in him calls for explanation and consideration in the light of the views on doctrine which he held, surely this is especially the case with the mental state now under discussion to which he alludes so frequently in both public and private utterances. At the same time it must not be overlooked that occasionally he is speaking with his wonted hyperbole and love of paradox, and that sometimes what he says is not meant quite seriously; moreover, that sometimes, when apparently blaming himself, he is really only trying to describe the heights which he fain would attain; the true standard by which to judge all these many statements which are yet so remarkably uniform must, however, be sought in the theological groundwork of his attitude towards faith.

[1] To Hier. Weller, June 19, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 5.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, pp. 9, 88. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 316. "Werke," Erl. ed., 52, p. 24 f.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 99.

Luther's Notion of Faith

As we already know, by faith he understands on the one hand the accepting of all the verities of revelation as true; more often, however, he means by it simply a believing trust in salvation through Christ, a certainty of that justification by faith which constitutes his "Evangel."[1]

For faith in the former sense he rightly appeals to the firm and immovable foundation of God's truth. But, as regards the source whence mankind obtains its knowledge of revealed truth, he practically undermines the authority of Scripture—which he nevertheless esteems so highly—first, by his wanton rejection of whole books of the Bible and by his neglect of the criteria necessary for determining which books belong to Holy Scripture and for recognising which are canonical;[2] secondly, by his interpretation of the Bible, more particularly in ascertaining the Divine truths therein contained, he flings open the door to subjectivism and leaves each one to judge for himself, refusing even to furnish him with any sure guidance.[3] He set aside the teaching office of the Church, which had been for the Catholic the authentic exponent of Scripture, and at the same time had guaranteed the canonicity of each of its parts. Of the Church's olden creeds he retained only a fragment, and even this he interpreted in his own sense.[4]

Thus, under the olden name of faith in revelation he had really introduced a new objective faith, one utterly devoid of any stay.

It is sufficient to consider certain of his quite early theses to appreciate the blow dealt at the Church's traditional view of faith. To these theses he was moved by his polemics against certain, to him, distasteful dogmas of the ancient Church, but from the very outset his attack was, at bottom, directed against all barriers of dogma, and, even later, continued to threaten to some extent the very foundations of that religious knowledge which he held in common with all other Christians.[5] The unrestrained freedom of opinion which many Protestants claim to-day as part of the heirloom

[1] See vol. iii., p. 13 ff.; vol. iv., pp. 413 ff., 440 ff., 444, 448.
[2] Above, vol. iv., p. 398 ff.
[3] Above, vol. iv., p. 403 ff. [4] *Ib.*, pp. 404 f., 410 ff., 414 f.
[5] Above, vol. iii., pp. 8 ff., 18 ff., and below, xxxiv., 1.

of Christianity they are wont to justify by citing passages from Luther's writings, e.g. from his work of 1523, "Das eyn Christliche Versamlung odder Gemeyne . . . Macht habe, alle Lere zu urteylen," etc.[1]

The fact of having taught faith in the second sense mentioned above, and of having put it in the place of faith in the first and olden sense is, according to many moderns, the achievement that more than any other redounds to Luther's credit.—He made an end of the "unevangelical idea of faith as a mere holding for true, and of the submission of the most inward and tender of questions to the decision of courts of law";[2] in the trustful belief in Christ he rediscovered the only faith deserving of the name and thereby brought back religion to mankind.

This trusting faith, however, by its very nature and according to Luther's express admission is, as has already been pointed out in detail, also devoid of any true stay, is ever exposed to wavering and uncertainty and is wholly dependent on feeling; above all, for a conscience oppressed with the sense of guilt to lay hold on the alien righteousness of Christ by faith alone is a task scarcely within its power; it admittedly involves an unceasing struggle;[3] lastly, true faith, according to Luther, comes only from God, from whom man, who has no free-will, can only passively look for it,[4] nay, it belongs in the last instance only to the Revealed

[1] The "Süddeutsche Blätter f. Kirche u. freies Christentum" (1911, No. 24) appealed, as against the deposition of Pastor Jatho by the Spruchkollegium of Berlin, to Luther's words in the above writing: "In this matter, i.e. in judging of doctrine, deposing teachers or those holding a cure of souls, we must pay no heed to human regulations and laws, to ancient custom and usage, etc. . . . the soul must be ruled and gripped only by the Eternal Word." "It is high time," adds the Editor, "for us again to call to mind that view of faith which gives to the soul and the conscience that sacred and inalienable right to which every man has a claim"; he also points out, again appealing to Luther, the "impossible state of things" to which any compulsion exercised under plea of the Creed must lead, of which each of the twelve judges of the Spruchkollegium has a different opinion. "It is admittedly allowable to deviate to a certain extent from the Confession of the Church. In this case, however, the judges suddenly turn on a man and say: But not so far as this. The question is: How far then may one go?

[2] "Süddeutsche Bl.," *ib.*

[3] See above, vol. iv., p. 441.

[4] Vol. i., pp. 92, 203 f., 213, 231 f.; vol. ii., pp. 232 ff., 286 ff.; vol. iv., p. 434 f.

God, for of the dispensations of the Hidden Will of God concerning our future in heaven or in hell we are entirely ignorant.[1]

Here too, then, we have a new kind of faith.

This explains how it is that in Luther's statements concerning his personal faith, his preaching, his absorption in the religious point of view he has discovered, his doubts and his fears, we meet with so much that sounds strange. We say strange, for they cannot but unpleasantly surprise anyone accustomed to regard faith in the truths of religion as a firm possession of the mind and heart, above all a Catholic believer. Before Luther's day scarcely can a single Christian teacher be instanced who was so open in speaking of the weakness of his own faith or who so frequently and so persistently insisted on pitting his own experience against the calm inward certainty with which God ever rewards a humble and heartfelt faith, even in those most beset with temptations.

When, in spite of this, we find Luther throughout his life plainly and indubitably accepting as true a large portion of the common body of faith (as we have repeatedly admitted him to have done),[2] then it is easy to see that in so doing he is not taking his stand on his new and shaky foundations, but on the old and solid basis to which he reverts with a happy want of logic, often perhaps unconsciously. We should see him taking his stand on this foundation even more frequently had not his sad breach with the whole past moved his soul to its very depths. There can be no doubt that his terrors of conscience, or "struggles with the devil," had much to do in inducing the condition in which he reveals himself to the reader of what follows.

Luther as Pictured by Himself during Later Years

It is clear that, in order to judge of Luther's life of faith, stress must not be laid on isolated statements of his torn from their context, but that they must be taken in the lump.

When speaking of his temptations, as a man of fifty-six, he bewailed the prevailing unbelief, at the same time including himself: "If only we could believe concerning the [Divine] promises

[1] Vol. i., p. 187 ff.; vol. ii., pp. 268 ff., 291.
[2] Vol. ii., p. 397 ff.; vol. iv., p. 526 f., etc.

that it was God Who spoke them! If only we paid heed to His Word we should esteem it highly. But when we hear it [God's Word] from the lips of a man, we care no more for it than for the lowing of a cow."[1]—Shortly before this, again including all, he consoles himself as follows: Our weakness was ever disposed to doubt of God's mercy, and even Paul felt his shortcomings. "I am comforted when I see that even Paul did not rise high enough. Away with the ambitious who pretend they have succeeded in everything! We have God's words to strengthen us and yet even we do not believe."[2] "I have preached for five-and-twenty years," so he said about that time, "and do not yet understand the text 'The just man liveth by faith.'"[3]

Of his trusting belief in his personal salvation he admits, in 1543, that he did not feel it to be very steadfast, and that it still lagged behind that of ordinary believers. He speaks of a woman at Torgau who had told him that she looked upon herself as "lost," and shut out from salvation, because she was unable to believe (i.e. trust). He had thereupon asked her whether she did not hold fast to the Creed, and when she assured him that she did he had said: "My good woman, go in God's name! You believe more and better than I do." "Yes, dear Dr. Jonas," so he said, turning to his friend, "yes, if a man could verily believe it as it there stands, his heart would indeed jump for joy! That is certain."[4]

So strongly did he express himself on this point on May 6, 1540, that, taking the words as they stand, he would *seem* to deny his belief in Christ's miracles and work. "I cannot believe it and yet I teach others. I know it is true, but I am unable to believe it. I think sometimes: 'Sure enough you teach aright, for you are in the sacred ministry and are called, you are helpful to many and glorify Christ; for we do not preach Aristotle or Cæsar, but Jesus Christ.' But when I consider my weakness, how I eat, drink, joke and am a merry man about the town, then I begin to doubt. Oh, if only a man could believe it!"[5] These words were spoken on Ascension-Day, after Luther had expressed his marvel at the strong faith of the Apostles in the Divinity of Him Who was ascending into heaven. "Wonderful; I cannot understand it nor can I believe it, and yet all the Apostles believed."[6] "I am fond of Jonas [who was seated near him] but if he were to ascend

[1] Khummer, in Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 73. For Khummer's Notes (which end in 1554) see Kroker, Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. xxii., and Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," Introduction, p. ix. f.—Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 219.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 128, in 1538.—Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 229 *sq.*

[3] Lauterbach, *ib.*, p. 81 (1538). Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 374.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 313. Cp. "Historien," p. 147.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 79. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 103: "That I eat and drink and am at times merry and a good boon companion," etc.

[6] "*Ego non intelligo nec possum credere, et omnes apostoli crediderunt*" (even before the descent of the Holy Ghost).

into heaven here and now, and disappear out of our sight, what should I think ? "

" Oh, if only a man could believe it ! "

It is evident that he did not wish by such words to give himself out as an unbeliever or a sceptic in religious matters. What he was painfully aware of was the fact that that strong, clear faith in the ordinary truths of revelation and matters of faith, which he himself was wont to depict as essential, was absent in his own case. His former violent struggles of conscience seem in later years to have been replaced by this uncomfortable feeling.

The depressing sense of the feebleness of his religious belief was not removed by the frequent references Luther was so fond of making in his old age to the coming of the Redeemer and Judge of the world, and to the nighness of the devil's downfall, who is the Lord of this world.[1] We know already the psychological reasons for the stress he lays on such expectations. Yet all the unnatural ardour he showed in voicing them could not disguise the fact that his faith lacked any real strength or fervour. Spiritual coldness could quite well co-exist with a virulent hatred of the devil and a longing desire for the end of the world.

" The devil is an evil spirit . . . as I do not fail to realise day after day ; for a man waxes cold, and the more so the longer he lives." Thus to Count Albert of Mansfeld in 1542.[2]—He was " in pain and very morose," he tells Jonas in 1541, " feeling disgusted with everything, especially with his illnesses.[3] In 1544, and frequently about that time, he declares that he was quite tired of the devil and of his struggles with him ; his only wish was to see the " end of his raging," and to " die a good and wholesome death."[4] " God Himself may see to my soul's lodging " ; He loved souls, says Luther, and it was a good thing that his salvation was not in his own hands, otherwise he " would soon be gobbled up by Satan " ; but God's care and the " many mansions " in His gift were a sufficient consolation (1539).[5]

On one occasion, in 1542, he mentioned that, unless he had escaped from certain " thoughts and temptations," he would have been drowned in them and would have long ago found himself in hell " ; for such " devilish thoughts " breed " desperate people," and " contemners of God."[6]

" Though, towards the end of life, such temptations are wont to cease," he says, in 1540, yet other inward worries remain : " I am often angry with myself because I find so much in me that is unclean. But what can I do ? I cannot strip off my nature. Meanwhile Christ looks upon us as righteous because we desire to be righteous, abhor our uncleanliness, and love, and confess the Word."[7]—Others, like Spalatin, in their old age, felt the bite of

[1] See above, p. 241 ff. [2] Dec. 8, 1542, " Briefe," 5, p. 514 f.
[3] May 5, 1541, " Briefwechsel," 13, p. 328.
[4] To Jakob Probst, Dec. 5, 1544, " Briefe," 5, p. 703. Above, p. 226 ff.
[5] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 360.
[6] To Count Albert of Mansfeld, Dec. 8, 1542, " Briefe," 5, p. 513.
[7] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 115.

conscience more strongly than did Luther; they had not been through the same violent struggles and mental gymnastics as Luther, nor had they learnt how to suppress the voice from within. It was to Spalatin, then sunk in melancholy, that, in 1544, Luther addressed the words already quoted: He (Spalatin) was "too timid a sinner" ("*nimis tener peccator*"). "Unite yourself with us great and hardened sinners, in a believing trust in Christ!"[1]

Earlier Undated Statements

Many utterances and confidences of Luther's still exist, about the meaning of which there can be no doubt, though it is difficult correctly to place them. Some of these concern the subject now under discussion; several may well date from Luther's later years, and thus throw light on his interior in his old age. We shall give first of all his statements concerning St. Paul in their bearing upon himself.

Speaking once of a pet view of his in which he seems to have found great consolation, viz. that even Paul had not believed firmly (*neque Paulum fortiter credidisse*), Luther went so far as to question the apostle's belief in the "crown of justice" which he professed to look for, as "laid up for him in heaven" (2 Tim. iv. 8). Jonas, who was present, had declared "he could not bestow any credence on this statement of Paul's." Luther replied: It is quite true that Paul did not believe it firmly, "for it was above him. I too am unable to believe as I preach, although they all think I believe these things firmly." He goes on to allege the Divine Clemency, and jestingly says: Were we to fulfil the will of God *perfectly* we should be cheating God of His Godhead; and what would then become of the article of the forgiveness of sins?[2] At any rate he would fain have believed his own doctrines more strongly and vividly.

"Temptations against the faith," says Luther, "are St. Paul's goad and sting of the flesh [2 Cor. xii. 7], a great skewer and roasting-spit which pierces right through both spirit and flesh, both body and soul."[3]—And elsewhere: "At times I think: I really do not know where I stand, whether I preach aright or not. This was also St. Paul's temptation and martyrdom, which, as

[1] Aug. 21, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 680. See above, vol. iii., p. 197, n. 1.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, pp. 380, 393. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 59 *sq.* Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 209. From Schlaginhaufen's "Aufzeichn.," p. 132 f., June to Sept., 1532.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 113.

I believe, he found it hard to speak of to many." Yet, so Luther opines, Paul sufficiently hinted at it in the words "I die daily" (1 Cor. xv. 31).—The fact is, the Apostle is far from attributing to himself doubts on the faith either here or elsewhere. Luther, however, would gladly have us believe, that, with his doubts, he had been through precisely that experience to which St. Paul refers when he says, "I die daily"; he, too, has his agonies, he, too, has descended into hell.[1] Not merely in this does he resemble Paul, but also in his inability to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel: "Paul and I have never been able to manage this."[2] He saw also another point of similarity between himself and the Apostle of the Gentiles. For, like him, St. Paul, too, "had been much bothered by the objection, that, one should listen to the Fathers (cp. Rom. ix. 5) and not oppose the whole world single-handed.[3]

Not Paul alone, according to Luther, but all the other Apostles too had been assailed by doubts.

He was always consoled to find new and illustrious companions in his misery. Christ, he declares, had foretold this to the Apostles; He had also spoken to them of this sort of persecution: "Your conscience will grow weak so that you will often think: 'Who knows whether I have been right? Alas, have I not gone too far?' Thus in the eyes of the world and to your own conscience you will seem to be in the wrong"; it had, however, been the duty of the Holy Ghost to comfort the Apostles in all such trials.[4]

And did not "even the man Christ have His momentary failing in the Garden?"[5] Did not Christ then confess: "'I know not how I stand with God, or whether I am doing right or not.' This occurred even in the case of Christ."[6] "All who are tempted must set Christ, Who also was tempted in everything, as a model before their eyes; but it was much harder for Him than for us and for me."[7] Luther fails to take into account the world-wide difference between the sadness of Christ, Who could never waver in the Truth, and his own doubts and wavering in the faith.

"O, my God," he said on another occasion, "the article on faith won't go home; hence so many sad moods arise. Often I have to take myself to task for failing to master such moods when they come, I who have so often taught in lectures, sermons and writings how such temptations are to be overcome."[8]

His pupil Mathesius relates the following in his sermons on Luther, the preface to the printed edition of which he wrote in 1565: "Antony Musa, pastor of Rochlitz, told me that he once complained bitterly to the Doctor of being unable to believe him-

[1] *Ib.*, 58, p. 26. [2] *Ib.*, p. 308.
[3] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 18, p. 223, Expos. of Psalm xlv.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 159.
[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 1, in 1531.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 84, May, 1532. [7] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 45.
[8] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 452. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 110 f.

self what he preached to others. 'Praise and thanks be to God,' replied the Doctor, 'that this also happens to others. I fancied it was true only in my case.' All his life Musa never forgot this consolation."[1] So full of admiration for Luther was Mathesius, and probably so well schooled by his master in the theory and practice of a faith which has ever to strive after firmness, that he saw in this statement nothing at all unfavourable to his hero. On the contrary, he includes the story in a list of "all manner of wise sayings" which had fallen from the lips of Luther. He even assures us at the beginning of these notes that, "The man was full of grace and of the Holy Ghost, hence all who went to him for advice as to a prophet of God found what they sought."[2] Judging by this Mathesius must have been very easily satisfied in the matter of firmness of faith. Perhaps had his faith been stronger it would have fared better with him in the melancholy which came upon him towards the end of his life.[3]

"Ah," said Dr. Martin, so we read elsewhere in Notes made by his pupils, "I used to believe every single thing that the Pope and the monks chose to say, but now I actually cannot believe even what Christ says, Who assuredly does not lie. This is very sad and distressing. Never mind, we must and will keep it for that Day."[4]—"When the words of the prophet Hosea, 'Thus saith the Lord,' set to music by Josquinus, were sung at Dr. Martin Luther's table, the Doctor said to Dr. Jonas: 'As little as you believe this singing to be good, so little do I believe theology to be true. . . . I do indeed love Christ, but my faith ought to be much stronger and warmer."[5]—"Many boast of having at their fingers' ends the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, and I, wretch that I am, find so little comfort in the passion, resurrection, and forgiveness of sins! One thing indeed I can do, viz. eat our Lord God's bread and drink His beer; but to take that far more necessary treasure which is the free forgiveness of sins, this I cannot succeed in doing."[6]

Not merely does he ascribe his own experiences to the first followers of Christ, viz. to Paul and the other Apostles, but again and again he seeks to make them out to be an evil common to all, an heritage of all Christians, nay, something actually involved in the idea of faith. Often he speaks of faith as of something altogether mystical and intangible of the presence of which no man can be conscious. Faith, he thinks, might well not be present at all just when a man fancies he possesses it; again, it might exist in the man who thought he lacked it; or "at any rate such is the case in

[1] Mathesius, "Historien," p. 147'.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 147. [3] See above, vol. iv., p. 218 ff.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 209, and similarly, 58, p. 385.
[5] *Ib.*, 58, p. 397. [6] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 52 *sq.*

times of stress and temptation ; for it often happens with faith that he who fancies he believes, believes nothing at all, while the man who thinks he believes nothing and lies in despair, really believes the most. . . . He who has it, has it. We must believe, but we neither must nor can know it for certain " [i.e. whether we really believe]. Thus in 1528.[1] Needless to say this theory of his was far removed from the strong, simple and perfectly conscious faith of so many thousands even of the humblest followers of the olden religion.

Some years before this, in a work intended for all, he had made a practical application to himself of this curious doctrine of the frequent impossibility of saying whether one really has the faith. Owing to his temptations he admitted that he was not qualified to be reckoned an authority on this question, nor " even a disciple, much less a master."

" Whoever boasts," he says in his work on Psalm cxvii., " that he knows very well we must be saved without our works by the grace of God, does not know what he is saying "; " it is an art which keeps us ever schoolboys," a scent after which we must " sniff and run." " Let anyone who chooses take me as an example of this, which I admit myself to be. Several times, when I was not thinking of this cardinal doctrine, the devil has caught me and plagued me with texts from Scripture till heaven and earth seemed too tight to hold me. Then human works and laws would seem quite right and not an error would be noticed in the whole of Popery. In short, no one but Luther had ever erred ; and all my best works, doctrines, sermons, books were condemned. . . . You hear now how I am confessing to you and admitting what the devil was able to do against Luther, who of all men ought surely to have been a very adept in this art. For he has preached, told, written, spoken, sung and read so much about it and yet remains a tyro in it, and is at times not even a disciple, much less a master."[2]

What he is trying to impress on the reader is, that even

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 155 ; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 296. " Von der Widdertauffe." In this passage he tries to prove that the text : " He who believes and is baptised shall be saved " (Mk. xvi. 16), could not be quoted in favour of re-baptism ; the person baptising could not be certain that the adults brought faith with them to baptism, nor could the adult catechumen always be certain he had the faith.

[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 40, p. 325 f., in 1530.

if you "can do all things," take care that "your art does not fail you."

Thus he did not enjoy the happiness which, according to the testimony of Catholics both learned and unlearned, was shared by all the faithful so long as they paid attention to their religious duties. Guided from their youth by the hand of the Church they were acquainted with no fears and uncertainties, for, thanks to her divine commission and gift of infallibility, she could make up for the insufficiency of human knowledge. Catholics did not look for salvation in a blind and unattainable trust in an imputation of Christ's righteousness.

Their attitude indeed presents a striking contrast to Luther's restless struggle after faith.

Not only in the last cold, barren years of his life but even at an earlier period we notice in him a tendency to regard this clutching at faith as the one great matter. In some quite early statements he depicts himself as on the look-out for a believing trust, as violently striving to clasp it to his breast, and, generally, as making this the end of all religious effort.

Even in 1517 in his unpublished Commentary on Hebrews we find a remarkable and oft-repeated admonition which bears on the subject in hand. He sees the troubled conscience "in fear and oppressed whichever way it turns"; hence it must learn to embrace faith in the power of Christ's blood: "By faith conscience is cleansed and put to rest." It is this faith in the blood of Christ which we must seek with all our powers to reach. It follows, "that the best of contemplating the sufferings of Christ is that it awakens in the soul this faith or believing trust." "The oftener he dwells on the Passion, the more strongly will every man believe that the blood of Christ was shed for his own sins. This is 'to eat and drink spiritually,' i.e. to feed on Christ in faith and thus become one body with Him."[1]

[1] According to the MS. in the Vatican Library (Palat. 1825, fol. 117): "*Dum (conscientia mala) præteritum peccatum non potest mutare et iram futuram nullo modo vitare, necesse est, ut, quocunque vertatur, angustetur et tribuletur; nec ab his angustiis liberatur, nisi per sanguinem Christi, quem si per fidem intuita fuerit, credit et intelligit, peccata sua in eo abluta et ablata esse. Sic per fidem purificatur simul et quietatur, ut iam nec pœnas formidet præ gaudio remissionis peccatorum. Ad hanc igitur munditiam nulla lex, nulla opera et prorsus nihil nisi unicus sanguis Christi facere potest; ne ipse quidem, nisi cor hominis crediderit eum esse effusum in remissionem peccatorum.*"—Fol. 117′: "*Quæ (fides remissionis peccatorum) haberi non potest nisi in verbum Dei, quod prædicat nobis, sanguinem Christi effusum esse in remissionem peccatorum.*"—Fol. 118: "*Unde sequitur, quod hi qui meditantur Christi*

On the other hand, the teaching of antiquity concerning meditation on Christ's Passion and likewise the hints contained in the language of the Church's liturgy, do not stop short at such an arousing of faith. Taking for granted the Christian's faith, what they seek to awaken is a real love; meditation on the sufferings and death of our Lord was above all to stimulate the faithful to feelings of loving gratitude, holy compassion and self-sacrifice; in wholesome compunction people were wont, by dwelling on the sufferings of the innocent Lamb, to rouse themselves to a sense of shame, to a holy desire to imitate Christ by good works of self-conquest and by zeal for souls. The ancient hymn, the "*Stabat Mater*," which is at the same time so profound and wonderful a prayer, says never a word of faith, precious as this grace is, but, taking it for granted as the ground-work, it teaches us to pray: '*Fac ut tecum lugeam—fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum—passionis fac consortem*," etc. This is surely something higher than that mere appropriation of trusting faith in which Luther sums up all the heights and depths of our union with Christ.

Luther, in his exaggerated language, declares that it was something "almost Gentile" for a man when contemplating the Passion of Christ to "strive after anything else but faith"; this statement, however, he refutes in practice by himself occasionally introducing other good and moral reflexions on the Passion, though he is always chiefly concerned with its bearing on his own peculiar view of faith.

He was too ready to confuse the sentiment of faith with actual faith.

Religious writers before Luther's day, when dealing with distrust and unbelief, had been careful to distinguish between the involuntary acts of man's lower nature which do not rise above the realm of feeling, and those which have the definite consent of the will and which alone they regarded as grievous sins against faith or the virtue of hope. With Luther everything is sin; he bewails the actual distrust, and real weakness of faith springing from a fault of the will; but, according to him, the involuntary movements of our corrupt nature also deserve God's signal anger; original sin whereby we bring this upon ourselves must daily be cloaked over by means of the faith wrought by God. But since it is God alone Who works this faith Luther might well have excused himself even had he lost the faith completely. When he is upset and begins to reproach himself as he often does on account of the weakness of his faith, he is really saying good-bye to his own teaching and again reverting to the standpoint of the olden faith, for only the assumption of man's free-will can justify self-reproaches.

passionem, tantum ut compatiantur aut aliud quam fidem consequantur, prope infructuose et gentiliter meditantur. . . . Quo frequentius meditetur, eo plenius credatur, sanguinem Christi pro suis peccatis effusum. Hoc est enim bibere et manducare spiritualiter, scilicet hac fide in Christum impinguari et incorporari."

"Sin" and "the devil" are made to bear the blame for the deeds of man who lacks free-will.

"The sin which still persists in us," says Luther, in his last sermon at Eisleben,[1] "compels us not to believe." "Because we have it daily before our eyes and at our door, it goes in at one ear and out at the other." "This is what the rude, savage folk do who care nought for God and place no trust in Him; we, the best of Christians, also do the same." "We are too prone to obey original sin, the taint of evil which yet sticks to our flesh, and although we would willingly believe, and are fond of hearing and reading God's Word, still we cannot rise as high as we ought."[2] Before this he had said: "If a man were to ask you: Good fellow, do you believe that the Son of God . . . died for your sins? and that it is really true? You would have to say—did you wish to answer right and truthfully and as you really feel—and confess with dismay, that you cannot after all believe it so strongly and indubitably. . . . You would have to say . . . Alas, I see and feel that I do not . . . believe as I ought."[3] Later he returns to this thought which evidently was much before his mind: "Although we cannot now believe so strongly as we should, still God has patience with us."[4] Yet "we ought to go on and believe more firmly and be angered with ourselves and say: Heavenly Father, is it true that I must believe that Thou didst send Thine only-begotten Son into the world? . . . And when I hear that there is no doubt, then I shall go on to say: Well, for this shall I thank God all the days of my life and praise and extol Him."[5]

In reality, according to him, we should "run and jump for joy" because by faith "we hear the Lord Christ speaking." "The life of the Christian ought, by rights, to be all joy and delight, but there are few who really feel this joy." The martyrs, with their glad, nay, even jubilant confession of faith amidst their torments, are to him an example of a sound, hardy, unshaken faith, for in them the Word was strong and the teaching of the Gospel all-powerful.[6] But, as he had remarked in another of his

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 502 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 548 f.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 547. [4] *Ib.*, p. 573.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 554. It is obvious that words such as: I do not believe as I ought, and: We cannot rise as high as we ought, may, in themselves, be taken in the best sense seeing they are to be met with even on the lips of saints. The prayer "*Credo Domine, sed adiuva incredulitatem meam*" was a usual one with the faithful, even the most devout. Nor was Luther alone in envying the children their pious faith (below, p. 369). These passages are, however, not the most characteristic of Luther's faith and doubts, rather all those other sayings, for which he was first and solely responsible and which are placed in their true light by his theological doctrines, must be taken together. The plausible-sounding words given above may well be accepted as proofs of deep feeling, seeing they stand side by side with other strong expressions of his belief in certain central truths of Christianity. The longing for improvement may quite well have remained alive even though the spirit of faith frequently felt itself slighted. [6] *Ib.*, p. 549.

Eisleben sermons, "We, owing to the weakness of our faith, feel doubts and fears, as by our very nature we cannot help doing"; yet we must "have wisdom enough again and again to run to Christ and cry aloud and awaken Him with our shouts and prayers."[1]

Luther's farewell address where these words occur furnishes at the same time an example of how, throughout his life, when assailed by doubts and fears, or when the Evangel was in danger, as it then was owing to the Emperor's warlike preparations, he carried out his injunction of "running to Christ." He seeks to pour into his faith a little of the strengthening cordial of defiance, and calls upon all his followers to do the same: "Christ says . . . Obey me; if you have My Word, hold fast to it. . . . Leave Pope, Emperor, the mighty and learned to be as wise as ever they please, but do not you follow them. . . . Do not that which even the angels in heaven may not do. . . . The poor, wretched creatures, the Pope, Emperor, kings and all the sects fear not to presume this; but God has set His Son at His right hand and said, Thou art My Son, I have given Thee all the kings and the whole world for Thy possession, etc. To Him you kings and lords must hearken." "I will give you courage," Christ says, "to laugh when the Turk, Pope and Emperor rage and storm their very worst; come ye only to me. Though you be burdened, faced by death or martyrdom, though Pope and Turk and Emperor attack you, fear ye not."[2]

It is, in fact, quite characteristic of his faith, that, when in difficulties, the more he becomes conscious of its lack of theological foundation and of its purely emotional character, the more he arms himself with the weapons of defiant violence. On the one hand he can say, as he does in the Table-Talk of Cordatus: "Had I such great faith as I ought to have, I should long ago have slain the Turk and curbed every tyrant.[3] "I have indeed tormented myself greatly about them. But my faith is wanting." And yet on another occasion, with a sadness which does him credit, he expresses his envy of the "pure and simple faith" of the children, and laments: "We old fools torment ourselves and make our hearts heavy with our disputations on the Word, whether this be true, or whether that be possible."[4]

Luther's Pretended Condemnations of his whole Life-work

Certain controversialists have alleged that Luther came outspokenly to disown his doctrine and his work; they tell us that he expressed his regret for ever having undertaken the religious innovation. Words are even quoted as his

[1] *Ib.*, p. 523. [2] *Ib.*, pp. 568 f., 571.
[3] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 209. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, pp. 92, 373.
[4] "Werke," *ib.*, p. 362.

which furnish "the tersest condemnation of the Reformation by the Reformer himself."

No genuine utterances of his to this effect exist.

The first abjuration of the whole of his life's work is supposed to be contained in the statement: "Well, since I have begun it I will carry it through, but, not for the whole world would I begin it again now."[1] But why was he disinclined to begin again anew? Not by a single word does Luther give us to understand the reason to be that he regarded what he had done as reprehensible; on the contrary, he explains that he would not begin it again "on account of the great and excessive cares and anxieties this office brings with it." That he by no means regarded the office itself as blameworthy is plain from the words that immediately follow: "If I looked to Him Who called me to it, then I would not even wish not to have begun it; nor do I now desire to have any other God." And before this, in the same passage, extolling his office, he had said: Moses had besought God as many as six times to excuse him from so arduous a mission. "Yet he had to go. And in the same way God led me into it. Had I known about it beforehand He would have had difficulty in inducing me to undertake it. It was Luther's wont thus to represent the beginning of his undertaking as having been entirely directed by God. He is fond of saying that he had foreseen neither its final aims nor its immense difficulties and then to proceed: My ignorance was a piece of luck and a dispensation of providence, for, otherwise, affrighted by the dangers, I should have drawn back from my labours. Here his idea is much the same, and is as far removed as possible from any self-condemnation. Of course the question, whether his idea that God alone was responsible for his work was based on truth, is quite another one.

The second utterance of Luther's which has been brought forward against him merely voices anew his disappointment with this wicked world and his complaint of the cold way in which people had received his Evangel though it is the Word of God: "Had I known when I first began to write what I have now seen and experienced, namely that people would be so hostile to the Word of God and would so violently oppose it, I would assuredly have held my tongue, for I should never have been so bold as to attack and anger the Pope and indeed all mankind."[2] Here, moreover, we have little more than a rhetorical exaggeration of the difficulties he had overcome.

Nor is it hard to estimate at its true value a third utterance wrung from him: "I can never rid myself of the thought and wish, that I had better never have begun this business."[3] The feeling which prompted this deliverance is plainly expressed in what follows immediately: "Item, I would rather be dead than witness such contempt of God's Word and of His faithful

[1] *Ib.*, 59, p. 245. [2] *Ib.*, 57, p. 32.
[3] *Ib.*, 58, p. 429.

servants." Here again he is simply giving vent to his ill-temper, that his preaching of the divine truths should receive such scant attention; not in the least can this be read as an admission of the falsehood of his mission.

Two other curious statements which have further been cited, besides having been spoken under the influence of the disappointment above referred to, also bear the stamp of his peculiar rhetoric which alone can explain their tenor. The context at any rate makes it impossible to find in them any repudiation of his previous conduct.

One of these sayings of Luther's does indeed ring strange: "The tyrants in the Papacy" "plagued the world with their violence"; but the people, now that they have been delivered from them, refuse to lend an ear to those who preach "at God's command," but prefer to run after seducers. "Hence I am going to help to set up again the Papacy and raise the monks on high, for the world cannot get along without such clowns and comedians."—The truth is, however, that Luther never seriously contemplated carrying out such a threat or countenancing the rule of "Antichrist." People simply misapprehended him when they read into this jest of his a real intention to re-establish "the Papal rule."

In the other saying brought up against him he states: "Had I now to begin to preach the Evangel, I would set about it otherwise." Here he is referring to a preceding remark, viz. that a preacher must have great experience of the world. He then proceeds: "I would leave the great, rude masses under the dominion of the Pope, for they are no better off for the Evangel but only abuse its freedom. But I should preach the Evangel and its comfort to the troubled in spirit and the meek, to the despondent and the simple-minded." A preacher, he declares, could not paint the world in colours bad enough, seeing that it belongs altogether to the devil; he must not be such a "simple sheep" as he himself (Luther) had been at the outset when he had expected all "at once to flock to the Evangel."[1]—Thus there is again no question of any repentant condemnation of the whole work of his lifetime. He clothes in his strange "rhetoric" an idea which is indeed peculiar to him, viz. the special value of his Evangel for those troubled in mind. It is his sad experiences, his personal embitterment and also a certain irritation with his own party that lead him here to lay such stress on the preference to be shown to troubled consciences, even to the abandonment of all others. Of his own exaggeration he himself was perfectly aware, for he also makes far too much of his simplicity and lack of prudence. The resemblance between what we have just heard him say and his theory of the Church Apart of the True Believers, can hardly escape the reader.[2]

The wish Luther is supposed to have expressed, viz. never to have been born, and some other strong things to which he gave

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 242. [2] See above, p. 133 ff.

vent, when in a state of depression, have likewise been quoted in support of the assertion that he himself branded his work "more cruelly than any foe dared to do." If, however, we take the statements in their setting we find they have quite a different meaning. As an instance we may quote one passage from a tract of 1539 "Against the Antinomians"[1] where, apparently, he curses the day of his birth and regrets that all his writings had not been destroyed. Alluding to Johann Agricola, an opponent within the camp, he writes: "I might in good sooth expect my own followers to leave me in peace, having quite enough to do with the Papists. One might well cry out with Job and Jeremias: 'Would that I had never been born!' and in the same way I am tempted to say: 'Would I had never come with my books,' I care nothing for them, I should not mind had they all been destroyed and did the works of such great minds [as Agricola] outsell them in all the booksellers' shops—as they would like, being so desirous of being fed up with honour."

Here both his good wishes to his adversary and his repudiation of his own books are the merest irony, though, reading between the lines, we get a glimpse of his pain and annoyance at the hostility he encountered. In the same vein of mingled grief and sarcasm he continues: Christ too (like himself) had complained through the Prophet (Isaias xlix. 4): "I have laboured in vain"; but it was plain (so little does he condemn his own preaching), that "the devil is master of the world" since the Gospel of the "beloved master of the house," which Luther taught, was so violently attacked. "We must and shall strive and suffer," so he cries, "for it cannot fare better with us than with the dear prophets and apostles who also had to bear these things." Seeing that, throughout the tract, he is inveighing against "devilish" deformations of his doctrine, is it likely that here he is cursing the day of his birth out of remorse for his teaching?[2]

An old story that has repeatedly found its way even in recent times into popular writings tells how Luther, in conversation, sadly admitted to Catherine that "heaven is not for us."

"One fine evening," so the tale goes, "Luther was in the garden with Catherine and both were looking up at the starlit sky. 'Oh, how beautiful heaven is,' Catherine exclaimed. 'Yes,' said Luther ruefully, 'but I fear it will not be ours.' 'Will not be ours?' cried Catherine, 'then in God's name let us retrace our steps.' 'It is too late,' replied Luther, and went back into his study with a heavy heart."

A recent work against Luther quotes in support of the legend a modern Danish writer, Pastor Stub. It would have been better to cite J. M. Audin, an uncritical French author of a "Vie de M. Luther," who helped to spread the story.[3] Audin, on his side,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, 1 ff. Cp. "Briefe," 5, pp. 147 ff., 183.
[2] Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 9, in the same work.
[3] German Trans., Augsburg, 1843, p. 212.

refers to George Iwanek, S.J. (†1693), who relates it in his "*Norma Vitæ*"[1]; also to Johannes Kraus, S.J., author of a rather credulous polemical work entitled "*Ovicula ex lutheranismo redux.*"[2] Kraus certainly took it from Iwanek, but from what source the latter had it we do not know. He mentions no authority and probably took the legend on hearsay and gave it too ready credence. As Luther seems occasionally to have said his night prayers in the open air, and as he frequently enough admits his struggles of conscience, the two together may have given rise to the legend.

Far from being sorry for the work he had undertaken Luther, on the contrary, is ever throwing on the devil the blame for all its drawbacks. He it is who has to bear the blame for Luther's own wretchedness, for inward wavering no less than for the lack of order, faith and morals among the Evangelical preachers and laity. He so works upon me "that I sometimes believe, and sometimes do not."[3] He could not view Satan's raging as of small account; it was far more to be dreaded than all the persecution of men. "You see from my books what scorn I have for those men who withstand me. I look upon them as fools"; even the lawyers I am ready to defy; "but when these fellows, the evil spirits, come, then the congregation must back me up in the fight," for then the devil, the very "Lord of the world," is entering the lists against me.[4] A glance at what has gone before shows how these "combats" must be understood.

The tone he adopts, though frequently humorous and satirical, does not conceal the deep depression which unquestionably underlies many of his utterances.

Such depression would quite well explain passing fits of real sorrow for all he had done. But that he really felt such sorrow is not sufficiently attested, so that all one can say is, that the ground for such a feeling of remorse was there.

[1] "*Norma vitæ ad instituendas recte actiones*," Pragæ, 1685, p. 276. This very rare book has only been found in the Gymnasialbibliothek at Mariaschein in Bohemia.

[2] *Op. cit.*, Pragæ, 1709, pars II., p. 39. "*Erigebat illos* [*oculos*] *interdum hæresiarcha Lutherus ad cœlum, cum illud sub mortem scintillantibus stellis pulcherrime rutilaret; sed quia turpissimo voluptatum cœno animum gerebat immersum, simul ita dicebat: Quam pulchrum est, Martine, cœlum, sed non est pro te.*" The passage occurs in connection with the Feast of the Ascension. The dialogue with Catherine was a later addition to the story.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 266; Erl. ed., 19², p. 76.

[4] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 411.

A discouraging sense of the instability of his doctrine and "reformation" might well have aroused contrition, for Luther himself saw only too plainly, as Döllinger rightly remarks, that, though he was strong enough to bring about an apostasy from the ancient Church yet he was powerless to effect a moral regeneration, or even to preserve religious order.[1] Döllinger adds very truly: The reasons for his doubts were, "first of all the recognition of the evil effects produced by his doctrine, then the consciousness of having cut himself adrift from the Church for the sake of a new doctrine previously unknown, and lastly the inward contradictions from which his doctrinal system suffered and the impossibility of squaring it with the many Bible passages which embody or presuppose a contrary doctrine."[2]

The words "agonies" and "nocturnal combats" which Luther so often used to describe his struggles of conscience remain to testify to their severity.

In the years immediately preceding Luther's death, these seem to have become less violent. Remorse of conscience, as experience teaches, however great it may at one period have been, can in progress of time be lulled to rest. We may quote in this connection the words of one of the most highly esteemed of the older Catholic spiritual guides, without however applying them unconditionally to Luther, as it is always difficult to gauge the extent and working of inward prejudice in the various stages of a man's mental growth, particularly in the case of such a man as Luther. "Sometimes God withdraws himself from the soul," writes this author, "on account of secret grievous sins which have been committed from culpable ignorance, or from that ignorance which, at the instigation of the Evil One, seeks to hide itself beneath a mantle of virtue. God then departs from the man, though the latter is not aware of it, and may remain unaware for the rest of his life until the night of death comes. The deluded man fancies he possesses God, but, to his infinite pain and loss, ultimately finds that he has been all the while without Him. In the Book of Proverbs (xiv. 12) it is written: 'There is a way which seemeth just to a man, but the ends thereof lead to death.'"[3]

[1] Cp. Döllinger, "Reformation," 3, p. 259. [2] *Ib.*, p. 246.
[3] Louis de Ponte (de la Puente), "Meditaciones," 1605; Latin ed. of 1857, t. 2, p. 216.

Who would venture to determine in Luther's case when exactly he first clearly realised his moral responsibility, and when exactly he succeeded in forming himself a false conscience? Though on the one hand it is certain to every Catholic that at first, and for a considerable while, his attack on the Church was extremely culpable, still one cannot close one's eyes to the fact that Luther himself was convinced that he was in the right, and that this conviction grew with advancing years. (See vol. iv., p. 306 f.) It was, however, of his own free-will that he persisted in the unhappy attitude of apostasy and revolt which had become a habit with him and thus, in itself, his burden of moral responsibility remained.[1]

[1] Cp. what Suarez says of habit: "*Habitus quidem per se ac formaliter, seu facta suppositione, minuit libertatem, quia inclinando magis voluntatem ad alteram partem minuit indifferentiam eius; tamen moraliter et in ordine ad effectus morales non censetur minuere, quamdiu illa consuetudo libera ac voluntaria est, propter eandem rationem, quia dispositio libera, ut sic, non minuit liberum.*" "Opp." 4, Paris., 1856, p. 209, n. 16.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT IS CONVOKED, 1542. LUTHER'S POLEMICS AT THEIR HIGHEST TENSION

1. Steps taken and Tracts Published subsequent to 1537 against the Council of the Church

At the meeting held in 1537 by the protesting Princes and Estates at Schmalkalden the General Council, which had been suggested as a means of bringing about a settlement and of establishing religious peace, was most outspokenly rejected, and that in a way very insulting to Rome.[1] In its blunt refusal the assembly was more logical than Luther and his theologians, who as yet were averse to an absolute repudiation of the Council. The hatred of the Pope which Luther himself had been so earnest in inculcating at Schmalkalden caused those with whom the decision rested to overlook certain considerations of prudence and diplomacy.

If Luther opposed a thoroughgoing rejection of the Council it was not because he had the slightest intention of accepting any Council that did not at once declare in his favour. He knew very well that under the conditions on which he insisted there could be no question of a real Council as the Church had always understood it. The real motive for his hesitation was that, for him and his followers, it was a delicate matter, in view of the attitude they had previously adopted on this question, to oppose too abruptly the idea of a Council. He foresaw that the Catholic Imperialists would overwhelm the Protestants with most righteous and bitter reproaches for now turning their backs upon the Council after having at one time been loudest in their demands for it, and outdone themselves in complaints and murmurs on account of its postponement. What impression would the attitude of the protesting Princes make on the Emperor, who was now full of plans for the Council? And

[1] See vol. iii., p. 430 ff.

would not many be scared away who were still halting at the parting of the ways and were inclined to delay their decision until the looked-for Council? "The Papists assert that we are so reprobate," wrote Luther, "that we refuse to listen to anybody, whether Pope, Church, Emperor, or Empire, or even the Council which we had so often called for."[1] Such considerations, however, were not strong enough to prevent him at once lending the whole weight of his voice in support of the resolution arrived at by the Schmalkalden Leaguers.

After so offensive a rejection of any further attempts at reunion, the armed conflict with the Emperor which had so long been threatening now seemed bound to come. Luther, putting all subterfuge aside, looked this contingency boldly in the face. In a memorandum to his Elector dating from the end of January, 1539, he expressed himself even more strongly than before in favour of the right of armed resistance to the Emperor and the Empire; should the former have recourse to violent measures against the Evangel, then there would be no difference between the Emperor and a hired assassin; if the overlord attempts to impose on his subjects blasphemy and idolatry, he must expect to meet with bloody resistance on the part of those attacked.[2]

While negotiations on which hung war or peace were in progress at Frankfurt, and while, in consequence of this, the question of the Council receded once more into the background, Luther was putting the finishing touch to his "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen," which appeared in the spring of 1539.[3] In spite of being weak and unwell his powers of work seemed inexhaustible; his own troubles and worries were all forgotten when it was a question of entering the lists as the leader of the movement. The work was intended to forestall the Œcumenical Council should it ever become an accomplished fact, and to frustrate as far as possible its harmful effects on himself. In it with the utmost audacity the author pits his own authority against that of the highest secular and ecclesiastical powers; his tone is at once so self-confident and so coarse that here again it provides the psychologist with an enigma.

[1] To Amsdorf, July 9, 1546, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 746.
[2] See vol. iii., p. 59 ff., particularly p. 70.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 278 ff.

With his projected Council, so he says at the commencement, the Pope in reality only wanted to deal the Emperor and all Christians "a blow on the snout." He held out the Council to them just as, in playing with a dog, we offer him a morsel on the point of a knife, and, when he snaps at it, we hit him with the handle. He declares roundly that, "the Papists would not and could not hold a Council unless indeed they first took captive the Emperor, the kings and all the princes."[1] If the Emperor and the Princes wished "reprobates to slap their cheeks," then let them continue to debate about the Council. The alleged impossibility of the Council he proclaims still more rudely, asserting that, the Papists being what they are, the whole world must despair of any amelioration of the Church: "They would rather leave Christendom to perish, and have the devil himself for their God and Lord, than accept Christ and give up even one jot of their idolatry." Hence we must look for reformation from Christ our Lord, "and let them fare devilwards as they are bent on doing."[2]

He then goes on to explain that amendment was impossible on the olden principles of the Fathers and canons, but could come about only by means of Holy Scripture; the Fathers and canons were not at one; even the first four Œcumenical Councils—the history of which he treats summarily though with little real historical knowledge—had only been able to ratify the belief laid down in Scripture; for faith a surer and more stable foundation was necessary than that of ecclesiastical Councils ever subject to make mistakes. At the same time he has nothing but scorn for the claims of the ancient and universal Church to be the permanent infallible teacher on matters of faith; he has no eye for her divinely guaranteed power as it had been exemplified in the General Councils, so solemnly representing the Churches of the whole world. On the other hand, his own pretensions are far above question. He knows, so he asserts, much more about the ancient Councils than all the Papists in a lump. He could instruct the Council, should one actually be summoned, on its procedure and its standards. It has, according to him, no power in the Church save to reject new errors which do not agree with Scripture (as though a Council had ever adopted any other course). Even the office of a clergyman or schoolmaster may, he says, be compared with that of the Councils in so far as, within their own small sphere, they judge human opinions and human rules by the standard of the Word of God, and seek to oppose the devil. But just as, in the case of these, he cannot guarantee that they will always read Holy Scripture aright, so also in the case of the Councils.

If, however, such a solemn Council was convened—and such a thing might conceivably be of some use—then the first requirement, so he declares with surprising frankness, was "that, in the Council, the Pope should not merely lay aside his tyranny of human law, but also hold with us. . . . The Emperor and the

[1] P. 281. [2] P. 282 f.

kings must also help in this and compel the Pope should he refuse."[1] This he wrote for the disabusal of the infatuated, for at that time, strange to say, some Germans of the greatest influence still fancied it possible to pave the way for a reconciliation by means of negotiations and religious conferences, and were anxious to leave the Lutheran question in suspense until a General Council should meet. Luther further demands, that "the thoroughly learned in Holy Scripture . . . and a few prudent and well-disposed laymen . . . should also be invited to the Council. Then the abominations of the Pope would speedily be condemned."

He adds: "Yes, you will say, but of such a Council there is no hope. That is what I think too."[2]

He is ready, however, to be content with a Provincial Council of the same sort held in Germany, and expresses the strange hope, that "the other monarchs would in time approve and accept the decisions of such a Council." With this reference to the Provincial Council he is dallying with a proposal made by some shortsighted imperial advisers, viz. that a "free, German Council" should attempt to settle the controversy.

The author then proceeds to set forth his jumbled theories on the "Church" and finally brings the lengthy work to a conclusion with a protestation that his doctrine forms the very pillars on which the Church rests: "Whoever teaches differently, even were he an angel from heaven, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8). "We are determined to be the Pope's master and to tread him under foot, as Psalm xci. [13] says: Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon."[3]

In many parts of the "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen" Luther is inclined to repeat himself, whilst the style exhibits a certain dreariness and monotony often met with in this class of Luther's productions, at least when the ardour of his polemics begins to fail, or when his object in view is not popular instruction and edification. He himself on its completion wrote of it to Melanchthon who was attending the meeting at Frankfurt: "The book sadly vexes me, I find it weak and wordy."[4] At any rate with many who lacked any real discernment it no doubt served to cover Luther's and his friends' retreat from a position they had so long and persistently defended, viz. that a Council was the chief thing called for.

The fruitless meetings of Frankfurt and Hagenau and the equally fruitless conferences of Worms and Ratisbon were

[1] P. 408. [2] P. 409 f. [3] P. 448.

[4] March 14, 1539: "*mire me piget eius scripti, quod tam tenue et verbosum sit . . . tempus et labor fuit ultra vires meas.*" "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 115 f.

followed, in 1541, by the Ratisbon Interim. This, as might have been foreseen, satisfied neither party. As for the Council it had been repeatedly postponed by Paul III on account of the embroilments between the Emperor and France and the opposition of the Protestants.

At last, on May 22, 1542, the Pope convened a General Synod to begin in the town of Trent on Nov. 1 of that same year. The head on earth of the Catholic Church, in the Bull summoning the Council, spoke of the political obstacles now at last happily removed. The aim of the assembly was to be to debate, and by the light of divine wisdom and truth, settle on such steps " as might appear effective for the safeguarding of the purity and truth of the Christian religion, for the restoration of good morals and the amendment of the bad, for the establishing of peace, harmony and concord among Christians, both rulers and ruled, and lastly for opposing the inroads of the unbelievers [the Turks]." The Pope most earnestly implores the Emperor and the other Christian monarchs " by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose faith and religion are being most violently assailed both from within and from without," not to forsake God's cause but by active co-operation to support it in every way.

The grand project of a Council was, however, further delayed by the war which suddenly broke out between Charles V and France. Only on Dec. 13, 1545, could the first session be held at Trent. It was then indeed high time, for the Emperor Charles V, in the hope of securing a united front against the French, had shown himself much too disposed to yield to the German Protestants, as is evident from the Reichsabschied of Spires in 1544.

As to Luther: up to the very last moment he scoffed at the efforts of Rome, as though her proposals for reform were all mere sham. Under this cloak of contempt he concealed his real annoyance at the opening of the Council.

As soon as the new Bull of Convocation for 1545 appeared he wrote to his old friend, Wenceslaus Link: " I have seen the Pope's writing and the Bull convening the Council to Trent for Lætare Sunday. May Christ laugh last at the reprobates who laugh at Him. Amen."[1] A few days later he said in a letter to his confidant, Justus Jonas: " To believe the Pope's promises would be like placing faith in the father of lies whose own darling

[1] Jan. 17, 1545, " Briefe," 5, p. 714.

son he is."[1]—"The Pope is mad and foolish from top to toe," so he informs his Elector.[2] A "Feast of Fools"[3] is the only fit word with which he can describe the assembly of the ablest and most learned men in the Church, who came from every land, honourably intent on bringing peace to Christians and gaining a victory for truth. Luther had not the slightest doubt where the real well-spring of truth undefiled was to be found; on the same day that he wrote to his Elector the words just quoted, in a letter to Nicholas Amsdorf, the "true and genuine bishop of the Church of Naumburg," as he styles him, he says: "I glory in the fact that this at least is certain: The Son of God is seated at the right hand of the Father and by His Spirit speaks most sweetly to us here below, just as He spoke to the Apostles; we, however, are His disciples and hear the Word from His lips. Praise be to God Who has chosen us unworthy sinners to be thus honoured by His Son and has permitted us to hearken to His Majesty through the Word of the Evangel. The angels and the whole of God's creation wish us luck; but the Pope, Satan's own monster, grieves and is affrighted, and all the gates of hell shake. Let us rejoice in the Lord. For them the Day approaches and the end. I have in mind another book against Popery, but the state of my head and my endless correspondence hinders me. Yet with God's help I shall set about it shortly."[4] What he is thinking of is a continuation—which death prevented him from carrying out—of a new book with which we must now deal.

2. "Wider das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teuffel Gestifft." The Papacy renews its Strength

Luther's anger against the Papacy had been kindled into a glowing flame by the sight of the unity displayed by the Catholic Church in view of the Council. It seemed incredible to him that the old body which he had pronounced dead should again sit in Council and prepare to infuse new life into itself, to revive ecclesiastical discipline and to condemn the Church he himself had founded. His soreness at such a consolidation of Catholicism he relieved by a sort of last effort in his book "Against the Roman Papacy founded by the devil."[5]

It was only his broken health, a foretoken of approaching death, and his many cares that prevented his following it up as he had threatened in his letter to Amsdorf just quoted. As he says there, he only hopes that God will give him

[1] Jan. 26, 1545, *ib.*, p. 720.
[2] May 7, 1544, *ib.*, p. 736. [3] Below, p. 383.
[4] May 7, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 737.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 131 ff.

"bodily strength and ghostly energy enough" to enable him, "like Samson of old, to wreak one act of vengeance on these Philistines." The simile is truly a horrible one; the unhappy man, broken down from the effects of a life of tireless labour and endless excitement, still burns with the desire once more to shake the pillars of the ancient Church so as to bury all faithful Catholics beneath her ruins. As to what would be his, the blind Samson's, fate beneath the ruins he does not consider as seriously as the true members of the ancient Church would have wished him to do.

The occasion of the book was the following. Pope Paul III had sent to the Emperor two briefs in quick succession to dissuade him from making perilous concessions to the Protestants, and, in particular, in the interests of the Œcumenical Council, to oppose the project of holding a German National Council. Luther received from two different quarters an invitation to write against the supposed interference of the Pope. His Elector, through Chancellor Brück, requested, "that the said Martin may deal with the Pope's writing, particularly as the formal announcement of the Council is now to hand; for we have no doubt that he is well able to do this. The same might then be printed and launched into the public."[1] Another invitation to the same effect, supported by information to be used against the Pope, reached Luther indirectly from the Imperial chancery itself through the intermediary of Nicholas Perrenoti, a councillor; some of the officials seem to have been anxious to avenge themselves on Paul III for crossing their plans.[2]

The work was published on March 26, 1545. As early as April 13, Marsupino, Secretary to King Ferdinand, was able to present a copy to the Papal Legates at the Council of Trent. Justice Jonas at once brought out a Latin translation entitled "*Contra papatum romanum a diabolo inventum.*" Thus at the very time the General Council made its bow before the world, Luther's attack was brought to the notice of educated readers of all nations. No great harm was done to Catholic interests by Luther's hanging up the drastic picture of himself, depicted in this scurrilous writing, as a warn-

[1] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 655, n. 3118.

[2] Druffel, "Kaiser Karl V und die Römische Kurie 1544–46," in the "Abh. Bayr. Akad. der Wiss., hist. Kl.," vol. 13, Abt. 2, p. 215. "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 129 ff.

ing to the whole world; humanistic culture and the grand classic idiom had, however, scarcely ever before suffered such degradation as in the Latin rendering of this foul book.

The first and chief part of the work was to prove, that it was both wrong and presumptuous for the Popes to style themselves heads of Christendom, and that it was the devil alone who had put such a notion into their heads. In the second part it is demonstrated that in particular the claim made by the Popes that no one had the right to judge or to depose them was of fiendish origin. Finally, in the third, it is shown that the alleged handing over of the Roman Empire by the Greeks to the Germans through the instrumentality of the Popes was also a mere hellish lie.

Sincere admirers of Luther read with amazement this book, which, for all its ferocity, is so reminiscent of the gutter. Some, even of his followers, again openly expressed the opinion that by it he had harmed himself more than any foe could have done—so unmeasured are his words and so utterly crazy the things he propounds. At times the pages seem to have been written in nothing short of a paroxysm of hate, and can only be understood by bearing in mind the author's frightful state of inward turmoil.

The very first words give us a glimpse of what is to come: "The most hellish Father, St. Paulus Tertius, as though he were Bishop of the Roman Churches, has written two briefs to Carolus Quintus, our Lord Emperor. . . . He has also, to speak by permission, issued a Bull almost for the fifth time, and now once more the Council is to meet at Trent; no one, however, may attend it but only his own brew, the Epicureans and those who please him." Luther proceeds to ask whether this can really be a Council, which is ruled by the "gruesome abomination at Rome, who styles himself Pope," and not rather some "puppet-show got up during the Carnival to tickle the Pope's fancy."

The fury of the writer increases as he proceeds and he goes on to make the following demands: "Now let Emperor, kings, princes, lords and whoever can, set the axe to the root, and may God give no luck to hands that hang idle. First of all let them take from the Pope, Rome, Romandiol, Urbino, Bononia and all that he holds as Pope. . . . He won them by blasphemy and idolatry, and has laid waste the kingdom of Christ, wherefore he is termed the abomination of desolation [Mt. xxiv. 15]. After this the Pope himself, the Cardinals and the whole scoundrely train of his idolatrous Popish Holiness should be seized, and, as blasphemers, have their tongues torn from their throats and nailed in a row on the gallows-tree, in like manner as they affix their seals in a row to their Bulls; though even this would be but slight punish-

ment for all their blasphemy and idolatry. After this let them hold as many Councils as they please on the gallows, or in hell with all the demons. . . . They are criminal, shameless, obstinate creatures."[1]

The gloomy fancy that inspires his furious pen has, however, another kind of death in readiness for such opponents. "Were I Emperor I know full well what I should do: I would couple together all the blasphemous knaves, Pope, Cardinals and all the Popish crew, bind them and take them down to Ostia where there is a little stretch of water called in Latin the Mare Tyrrhenum. . . . Into it I would drop the lot and give them a good bath, along with the keys with which they bind and loose everything. . . . They might also take their pastoral staves so as to be able to smite the face of the waters. . . . And, lastly, as refreshing fodder and drink, they might have all the decrees, decretals, bulls, indulgences, etc. What do you wager that after half an hour in this healing bath all their diseases would cease? . . . On it I would risk Christ our Lord."[2]

"The Pope," so he exclaims on the same page, "is the head of the accursed Churches of all the worst knaves upon earth, a Vicar of the devil, a foe of God, an adversary of Christ and a destroyer of His Churches, a teacher of all lies, blasphemy and idolatry, an arch-church-thief and robber of the Church's keys, a murderer of kings and an inciter to all kinds of bloodshed, a whoremonger above all whoremongers and the author of every kind of immorality, even of that which may not be mentioned, an antichrist, a man of sin, a child of destruction, a real werewolf. Whoever refuses to believe this, let him fare away with his God, the Pope."[3]

"As an elect teacher and preacher to the Churches of Christ bound to speak the truth, I have herewith done my part. He who is set on stinking may go on stinking. . . . Let a Church be where it may throughout the world it can have no other Gospel . . . than we have here in our Churches at Wittenberg."[4]

As to how high Luther as a preacher and man of learning set himself and his Church above the Pope and his, we can see from what follows: "The whole Roman mob is nothing else but a stable full of great, rude, loutish, shameless donkeys, who know nothing of Holy Scripture, or of God, or of Christ, or what a bishop is, what God's Word, or the Spirit, or baptism is, or what are sacraments, the keys and good works. . . . I, Dr. Martin, am still living, and having been brought up in the Pope's school and donkey's stable became a Doctor of Theology, and was even accounted a good and learned Doctor, which I assuredly was, so that I can truly testify how deep, and high, and broad, and long is their skill in Holy Scripture."[5]—And lest someone should object: "Have you any right to judge?" he replies light-heartedly: "It is enough for us to know that the Pope-Ass has been condemned by God Himself and all the angels." "We

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 176. [2] *Ib.*, p. 229.
[3] P. 230. [4] P. 231. [5] P. 233.

cannot be heretics, for we have believed and confessed the Scriptures."[1]

An earlier saying of his to the effect that: "I am carried away and know not by what spirit" ("*rapior nescio quo spiritu*"), comes before the mind of the reader when Luther describes yet a third form of death for the Pope and his courtiers. He would fain see him, the Cardinals and the whole court, dealt with according "to fox-law, their hides being dragged over their heads, that they may thus be taught to pay with their skins; after this the hides may be thrown into the healing bath of Ostia, or into the fire." "See and behold," he exclaims, "how my blood boils! How it longs to see the Papacy punished though my spirit is well aware that no temporal penalty can make amends, even for one single Bull or decree!"[2]

Luther's defenders have, strange to say, thought it necessary to lay stress on the fact that these three proposals cannot have been seriously meant.[3] Everyone will admit that they are not a settled plan, for the carrying out of one would have rendered the others difficult or unfeasible. But does this fact modify in any way the revolting character of these words or cancel the invitation to make use of violence? It would be better to argue, that, owing to his fanatism about which only a pathologist can judge, he was not fully aware of what he was doing.—Some Catholics have suggested that the abnormal virulence of many pages of this book was due to the excitement caused by intoxicating liquors. Of this unfortunately there is no proof. That the reason for his horrible language must be sought rather in mental overstrain, in the preponderance just then of an abnormal side of his spiritual life, seems fairly clear also from the other quotations from this work which we were obliged to adduce elsewhere.[4]

Some time before the work in question was written, Brück, the Chancellor, had written to the Elector that, if the Council convened by the Pope "were to resume and continue its knavery" it would be necessary for Luther "to put the axe to the root of the tree, which by the Grace of God he is better able to do than other men"; this he wrote on Jan. 20, 1545.[5]

At that same time a calmer scene was being enacted in Saxony. On Jan. 14, the Wittenberg theologians, headed by Luther, presented to the Elector the so-called Wittenberg Reformation, drawn up at the sovereign's request. This work had a close connection with the Œcumenical Council. It is true it was merely written in view of the approaching negotiations at the Diet, to facilitate one of those "religious

[1] P. 235 f. [2] P. 242. [3] P. 91, n. 6.
[4] See vol. iii., p. 234 f.
[5] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 662 *sq.*, n. 3123.

compromises " which had now become so common. It was, however, at the same time, so to speak, a theological manifesto of the Protestants called forth by the Council. Hence it had been drawn up by Melanchthon (and not by Luther) in terms cautious and moderate. " The theologians," wrote Brück, " have drawn up their ' Reformation ' very courteously, nor is there any trace of Dr. Martin's boisterousness " in it.[1]

The " Reformation " treats successively of " doctrine true and undefiled," which it asserts is to be found in the Confession of Augsburg, " of the right use of the sacraments," of the preaching office and episcopal government, of the ecclesiastical courts and spiritual jurisdiction, of learning and the schools, and of the defence and support of the churches. Many useful elements which meet the actual needs of the time are found scattered through the document. Stress is laid on the need of some direction and supervision of the preachers in such a way as to suggest the recognition of episcopal authority ; the German episcopate is to be retained . . . provided it accepts Luther's doctrine ![2]

It would in many respects be instructive to draw a parallel between the " Wittenberg Reformation " and the Catholic reformation proclaimed by the Council of Trent in the course of its successive sessions. We shall emphasise only one point. In the case of proceedings against " false doctrine " the Wittenbergers go much further than the Council in their demands for submission on the part of the individual. According to them the ecclesiastical courts (Consistories) were to lend their firm support to Luther's own doctrine and interpretation of the Bible—for which, as a matter of fact, his name offered the sole guarantee—these courts were moreover to comprise " God-fearing men, chosen from among the laity of high standing in the Church." The question of any deviation from the faith, was, with their assistance, " first to be examined into and then judgment pronounced in the ordinary way." So painful a subordination of the individual to private opinions concerning faith, and so uncalled-for an introduction of the lay element

[1] " Corp. ref.," 5, p. 661. In the same letter.

[2] For text see " Corp. ref.," 5, p. 461 *sq.* ; also in " Luthers Werke," Walch's ed., 17, p. 1422 ff.

into the spiritual courts, never entered the mind of any member of the Council.

Conscious of its divine right the Council of Trent, even during Luther's lifetime, solemnly laid the foundations of those decisions on doctrine which are now, and for ever will be, binding on the Catholic Church. It rose far above the quarrels of the day and the personal attacks on the successor of Peter and the venerable hierarchy; in what it laid down it was careful ever to preserve intact the great bond with the past.

It was but a few days before Luther departed this life that the "Holy Œcumenical and General Synod legitimately called together in the Holy Ghost," as in accordance with ancient usage it styles itself, declared in its third session, that its highest task was to oppose the heresies of the day and to reform the morals of the people. During this session, on Feb. 4, 1546, the Council renewed the creed of the Roman Church as the "basis on which all who confess the faith of Christ are agreed and as the one firm foundation against which the gates of hell cannot prevail."

As the opposing camp had the habit of constantly appealing to Holy Writ so the Council, in its next session, held after Luther's death on April 8, 1546, solemnly declared Holy Scripture to be the "Spring of wholesome truth and discipline of morals," though at the same time, agreeably to the ancient and uninterrupted teaching of the Church, it also included tradition: "Which truth is contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which the Apostles received from the lips of Christ . . . and which, having been as it were handed down, have survived to our own day"; it, on the one hand, declared the sacred books of both Old and New Testament, the Canon of which it fixed anew, to have God for their author ("*Deus auctor*") and to be worthy of equal affection and reverence; on the other, it reasserted the rights of the teaching office of the Church and of the tradition handed down from ages past, both of which Protestantism had questioned. To prevent any abuse of the Word of God, it also enacted that no member of the Church, relying on his own prudence, should, in matters of faith and morals, twist Holy Writ so as to make it mean anything else "than Holy Mother Church

held and holds, seeing that it is hers to interpret Scripture" in accordance "with the unanimous consensus of the Fathers." The Council's first reforming decree also seeks to safeguard the treasure of Holy Scripture by forbidding any profanation of it or its use for superstitious purposes.

After long adjournments, necessitated by the state of public affairs and after the ground had been prepared by careful study of the Bible, the Fathers and the Schoolmen, there followed, in 1546 and 1547, the weighty discussions on original sin and justification. In the final Canon on the justification of the sinner by grace (vol. iii., p. 185), the point on which all the questions raised by the innovations turned, the Synod pronounces an anathema on any man who shall declare that the Catholic doctrine it has just laid down "detracts from the glory of God or the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, and does not rather enhance the truth of our faith and the glory of God and of Jesus Christ." There followed resolutions concerning the sacraments in general, then, in 1551, on the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance; and finally, to pass over other points, in 1562 and 1563, the decrees on Communion, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrament of priestly ordination, and on Marriage. The 25th and last session, on Dec. 4, 1563, was devoted to the doctrine of Purgatory, of the veneration of the saints and relics, indulgences, fast-days and festivals, and also to the drawing up of various far-reaching regulations on discipline.

The Synod had striven throughout to make its disciplinary decrees keep pace with its doctrinal promulgations. Thereby it provided a lasting and effectual foundation for the reform of the Church. This, taken in connection with so clear a statement of the unanimity of the Church's teaching throughout the ages, deprived the separatists of every pretext for remaining estranged from the unity of the faith. The main point was that the Church, purified from the many abuses to which human frailty had given rise, or at least earnestly resolved to remove those still remaining, stood forth again as the city on the hill, visible afar off in her splendour and calling all to her in order to make them sharers in the hope of life. She was confident that He Who had said: "I will be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," had extended His protecting Hand over the assembly, and had spoken through it for the instruction

of the faithful and also of the erring brethren. The infallibility of such general Councils was never questioned by any Catholic.

A fresh outburst of zeal was the result, and the ancient Church soon showed that she had within her unsuspected powers for self-improvement.

3. Some Sayings of Luther's on the Council and his own Authority

"They now seek to get at us under cover of a nominal Council," says Luther, "in order to be able to shriek at us. . . . This is Satan's wisdom as against the foolishness of God. How will God extricate Himself from their cunning schemes? Still, he is the Lord Who will mock at His contemners. If we are to submit to this Council we might as well have submitted twenty-five years since to the lord of the Councils, viz. the Pope and his Bulls. We shall not consent to discuss the matter until the Pope admits that the Council stands above him, and until the Council takes sides [with us] against the Pope, for even the Pope's own conscience already reproaches him. They are mad and crazy. '*Deo gratias.*'"[1]

A series of similar utterances may be quoted.

"The Papists are ashamed of themselves and stand in fear of their own conscience. Us they do not fear because, like Virgil of old, they console themselves with having already survived worse things. The paroxysm will cease suddenly. . . . They put to death the pious John Hus, who never departed in the least from the Papacy but only reproved moral disorders."[2] "For it was then not yet the time to unmask the [Roman] beast" (this having been reserved for me). "I, however, have not attacked merely the abuses but even the doctrine, and have bitten off the [Pope's] heart. I don't think the Pope will grow again. . . . The article of Justification has practically taken the shine out of the Pope's thunderbolts."[3]

"Our Church by the grace of God comes quite near to that of the Apostles, because we have the pure doctrine, the catechism, the sacraments and the [right] use of government, both in the State and in the home. If the Word, which alone makes the Church, stands and flourishes, then all is well. The Papists, however, who seek to erect a Church on conciliar decrees and decretals will only arouse dissensions among themselves and 'wash the

[1] To Amsdorf, July 9, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 746.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 48. [3] *Ib.*, p. 68.

tiles '—however much they may pride themselves on their reason and wisdom."[1]

"I must for once boast, for it is a long while since I did so last. A Council whereby the Church might be reformed has long been clamoured for. I think I have summoned such a Council as will make the ears of the Papists tingle and their heart burst with malice: for I take it, that, even should the Pope hold a General Council, he will not be able to effect so much by it. First, I have driven the Papists to their books, particularly to Scripture, and deposed the heathen Aristotle and the 'Summists.' . . . Secondly, I have made them to be more reserved about their indulgences. Thirdly, I have almost put an end to the pilgrimages and field-devilry." Only look, he says, at the reduction of the monasteries and the many other things which no Council could ever have achieved but which have been brought about by "our people." Everything had been lost, the "Our Father, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, Penance, Baptism, Prayer [etc., he enumerates twenty-one similar things]." "No institution, no monastery, university or presbytery" taught even one of these articles aright; now, however, "I have set all things in order."[2]

I can "write books as well as the Fathers and the Councils," and this I may say "without pride."[3] This is because I have "exercised myself" in the Word of God by "prayer, meditation and temptations" ("*oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio*").[4] In my "temptation" the devil raged against me in every way, but God in a wonderful manner "kept alight His torch so that it did not go out."[5] Persecution overtook me "like the Apostles," who "fared no better than their Lord and Master."[6] But the devil has entered into His foes the Papists, to whom, "in spite of all our good and well-meant admonitions, prayers and entreaties,"[7] they have surrendered themselves; and rightly so, for the Papists (as I know from my own youthful experience when I did the same myself) refuse even to recognise the Gospel as a mystery.[8] They simply make an end of all religion.

But, all this notwithstanding, as the Council shall learn "I am really a defender and prop of the Pope. After my death the Pope will suffer a blow which he will be unable to withstand. Then they will say: Would that we now had Luther to give some advice; but if anyone offers advice now they refuse it; when the hour is passed God will no longer be willing."[9]

After "God had given me that splendid victory which enabled me to get the better of my monkish vocation, the vows, masses and all the other abominations . . . Pope and Emperor were

[1] *Ib.*, p. 191.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 530 f.; Erl. ed., 63, p. 271. Preface to Klingebeyls' writing. Cp. an equally grotesque enumeration, above, vol. iv., p. 343.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 403. Preface to his German writings (1539). [4] *Ib.*

[5] *Ib.*, p. 408. German Preface (1548, compiled from Luther's own words). [6] *Ib.*, p. 412. [7] *Ib.*, p. 297 (1531). [8] *Ib.*, p. 369.

[9] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 157.

alike unable to stop me." It is true that I still have temptations to humble me, "but we remain victorious and shall conquer."[1]

"These Italians [at Trent they were present in large numbers] are profane men and Epicureans. No Pope or cardinal for the last six hundred years has read the Bible. They understand less of the catechism than does my little daughter. May God preserve us from such blindness and leave us His divine Word."[2]

This was the frame of mind in which Luther confronted the Council.

We shall be better able to appreciate the strangeness of his attitude if we imagine Luther, attended by a few theologians of his own circle, journeying to the Council at Trent and there holding converse with the foreign prelates, as he had done at Wittenberg with the Legate Vergerio.

In his wonted fashion he would not have hesitated to express plainly his views concerning his own authority. Some examples of his opinions of himself have already been given.[3] What impression would the Wittenberger's novel claims have made on bishops and theologians from distant lands where the Church was still in perfect peace, and where the spiritual supremacy of the hierarchy was unquestioned? With what astonishment would they have listened to those strange replies, which the Saxon had always ready in plenty, to such objections as they might have raised on the score of his disturbance of the peace of both Church and State, of the disorders within his own fold and of his own private life and that of his followers?

A number of other statements taken from his writings and conversations with his intimates may help to make the picture even more vivid.

"I have the Word," we can hear him saying to the bishops in his usual vein, "that is enough for me! Were even an angel to come to me now I should not believe him."[4]

"Whoever obtrudes his doctrine on me and refuses to yield, must inevitably be lost; for I must be right, my cause being not mine, but God's, Whose Word it also is. Hence those who are against it must go under. Hence my unfailing defiance. . . . I have risked my life on it and will die for it. Therefore whoever sets himself against me must be ruined if a God exists at all."[5]

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 10.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 48.
[3] Vol. iv., p. 329 ff.
[4] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 49.
[5] Schlaginhaufen, *ib.*, p. 74.

To friend and foe I can only say: "Take in faith what Christ says to you through me; for I am not deceived, so far as I know. It is not the words of Satan that I speak. Christ speaks through me."[1]

"Though there are many who regard my cause as diabolical and condemn it, yet I know that my word and undertaking is not of me but of God, and neither death nor persecution will teach me otherwise."[2]

And before anyone can slip in a word of rejoinder he, again, as his way was, appeals to his personal knowledge. "I know that God together with all His angels bears me witness that I have not falsified His Word, baptism or sacrament, but have preached rightly and truthfully."[3]

This doctrine I learnt in my "temptations," during which "I had to ponder ever more and more deeply." "What is lacking to the fanatics and the mob is that they have not that real foeman who is the devil; he certainly teaches a man thoroughly."[4]

The hostility met with, particularly from false brethren, is also "God's sure seal upon us"; by such "we have become like St. Paul, nay, like the whole Church."[5]

The chief thing for me, however, so he continues, is conscience and conviction. "Take heed," such is my axiom, "not to make mere play of it. If you wish to begin it, then begin it with such a clear conscience that you may defy the devil. . . . Be a man and do everything that goes against and vexes them [the opponents] and omit everything that might please them."[6]

To those who ask whether his conscience did not upbraid him for breaking the peace and for overthrowing all order, he replies: It is quite true "Satan makes my conscience to prick me for having by false doctrine thrown the world into confusion and caused revolts. . . . But I meet him with this: The doctrine is not mine, but the Son of God's; whole worlds are nothing to God, even should ten of them be rent by rebellion and go headlong to destruction. It is written in Holy Scripture [Mt. xvii. 5], 'Hear ye Him' (Christ), or everything will fall into ruins, and again [Ps. ii. 10], 'Hearken, ye kings,' or else ye shall perish. It was thus that Paul too had to console himself, when, in the Acts, he was accused of treason against God and Cæsar. God wills that the article of Justification shall stand, and if men accept it then no State or government will perish, but, if not, then they alone are the cause of their misfortune."[7]

With no less confidence is he prepared to counter the other

[1] To Spalatin, Aug. 21, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 680.

[2] To the same, March 7, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 110 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 36, p. 452; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 339, Sermon on Charity, 1532.

[4] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 59, p. 141 f.

[5] To Melanchthon, April 4, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 338.

[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 127.

[7] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 363.

objections. My doctrine breeds evil? "After the proclamation of the Evangel it is true we see in the world great wickedness, ingratitude and profanation; this followed on the overthrow of Antichrist [which I brought about]; but in reality it is only, that, formerly, before the dawn of the Evangel, we did not see so plainly these sins which all were already there, but now that the morning star has risen the whole world awakens, as though from a drunken sleep, and perceives the sins which previously, while all men were asleep and sunk in the gloom of night, they had failed to recognise. But [in view of all the wickedness] I set my hopes on the Last Day being not far distant; things cannot go on for more than a hundred years; for the Word of God will again grow weaker; owing to lack of ministers of the Word darkness will arise. Then the whole world will grow savage and so lull itself into a state of security. After this the voice will resound (Mt. xxv. 6): 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh.' Then God will not be able to endure it any longer."[1]

Is our own life any objection? It is no question of life but of doctrine, "and, as to the doctrine, it is indubitable that it is the Word of God. 'The words that I speak,' saith the Lord [John xiv. 10], 'are not mine but the Father's.'" Certainly "I should not like God to judge me by my life."[2]—"My doctrine is true and includes the forgiveness of sins, because my doctrine is not mine; Christ also says, 'My doctrine is not Mine.' My doctrine stands fast, be my life what it may."[3] "True enough, it is hard when Satan comes and upbraids us saying: You have laid violent hands on this marvellous edifice of the Papacy," you, "a man full of error and sin." "But Paul also, according to Rom. ix., had at times to endure similar reproaches." "We answer: We do not attack the Pope on account of his personal errors and trespasses; we must indeed condemn them, but we will overlook them and forgive them as we ourselves wish to be forgiven. Thus it is not a question for us of the Pope's personal faults and sins, but of his doctrine and of submission to the Word. The Pope and his followers, quite apart from their own sins, offend against the glory and the grace of God, nay, against Christ Himself, of whom the Father says: Hear ye Him. But the Pope would have men's ears attentive only to what he says!"[4]

But, because my doctrine is true, so he concludes, this had to come about, "as I had long ago foreseen; in spite of the purity of my theology I [like Paul] was alleged to have preached 'scandal' to the holy Jews and 'foolishness' to the sapient heathen."[5]—Nevertheless, "whoever teaches otherwise than I have taught, or condemns me, condemns God and must remain a child of hell."[6]—"For the future I will not do the Papists the

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 173.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 139.
[3] *Ib.*, from Veit Dietrich's collection.
[4] "Enarratio in Ps. xlv.," "Opp. lat. exeg.," 18, p. 223 *sq.*
[5] July 10, 1518, to Wenceslaus Link, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 211.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 229 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 347.

honour," of permitting them, " or even an angel from heaven, to judge of my doctrine, for we have had too much already of foolish humility."[1]

With what wonder and perplexity at so unaccountable an attitude would the foreign bishops have listened to words such as these!

4. Notable Movements of the Times accompanied by Luther with "Abuse and Defiance down to the very Grave." The Caricatures

Brunswick, Cleves, the Schmalkalden Leaguers

Luther followed with great sympathy and perturbation the warlike proceedings instituted by the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse against Duke Henry of Brunswick, whom he had himself already attacked with the pen in his " Wider Hans Worst." They made war on the Duke in the summer of 1542, seized upon his lands and of their own initiative introduced the innovations, their troops at the same time committing unexampled excesses.

Luther acclaimed the victory as a deed of God ; such a proceeding could not be described as the work of man ; such a success foreboded the approach of the Day of Judgment and retribution.[2]

The Imperial Chamber of Justice protested against the violent appropriation of the country by the Schmalkalden Leaguers, and, on Sep. 3, summoned the two princes and their confederates to Spires to answer for the breach of the peace committed at the expense of Duke Henry. Thereupon all the members of the League of Schmalkalden repudiated their obedience to the " wicked, dissolute, Popish rascals," as the Landgrave Philip politely styled the Imperial Court. In this he was at one with Luther, who, in former years, had called the Imperial Chamber " a devil's whore."[3]

A new war of the Leaguers on Henry, who was anxious to recover his lands, was crowned in 1545 by a still more notable success on the part of the rebels, who this time contrived to take the Duke himself prisoner. When, however, Philip of Hesse, out of consideration for the Emperor,

[1] *Ib.*, p. 107=144.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 560.
[3] Cp. Janssen, " History of the German People " (Engl. Trans.), vi., p. 218.

seemed inclined to set the captive free, Luther intervened with a circular letter addressed to Philip and his own Elector. He was determined to characterise any idea of setting free the "mischievous, wild tool of the Roman idol" as an open attack not merely on the Evangel, but even on the manifest will of God as displayed in the recent war which had been waged "by His angels." Here his pseudo-mysticism is again much to the fore. The circular letter was soon printed and spread broadcast.[1]

Without any deep insight into the real state of affairs, either political or ecclesiastical, unmindful even of diplomacy, Luther seeks to work on the fears of the Protestant princes by an extravagant description of the Divine Judgments which were overtaking blasphemers, and tells them they will be sharers in the sin of others if, now that God had "broken down the bulwark" of the Papacy, they were to set it up anew.

To the Papists he says: "Stop, you mad fools, Pope and Papists, and do not blow the flame that God has kindled. For it will turn against yourselves so that the sparks and cinders will fly into your eyes. Yes, indeed, this is God's fire, Who calls Himself a consuming fire. You know and are convinced in your own conscience that your cause is wicked and lost and that you are striving against God."[2]

He writes confidently: We on this side, without causing either Emperor or Pope "to raise a hair, have unceasingly prayed, implored, besought and clamoured for peace, as they very well know; this, however, we have never been able to obtain from them, but have had daily to endure nothing but insults, attacks and extermination." The defensive alliance of the Catholic Princes and Estates became in his eyes a robber-league, established under pretext of religion; "what they wanted was not the Christian religion but the lands of the Elector and Landgrave."[3] The captive Duke had obtained help from Italy, very likely from the Pope. "In short, we all know that the Pope and the Papists would gladly see us dead, body and soul, whereas we for our part would have them all to be saved body and soul together with us."[4] The whole writing, with its combination of rage and mysticism, and likewise much else dating from that

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 386. After Oct. 24, 1545.
[2] P. 402. [3] P. 391. [4] P. 401.

period, may well raise grave doubts as to the state of the author's mind.

The inroad into Brunswick was merely a preliminary to the religious wars soon to break out and ravage Germany. No sooner had Luther closed his eyes in death than they began on a larger scale with the Schmalkalden War, which was to prove so disastrous to the Protestants. His words just quoted to the princes of his party were repeated almost word for word in the Protestant manifestos during the religious wars.

It is possible that he may have been roused to make such attacks on the Catholics by certain disagreeable events which occurred from 1541 onwards. Political steps were being taken which were unfavourable to Lutheranism and not at all adequately balanced by the Protestants' victory in Brunswick and elsewhere.

Luther was made painfully aware of the unexpected weakening of the League of Schmalkalden which resulted from the bigamy of Landgrave Philip of Hesse. By virtue of a secret compact with the Emperor, into which Philip of Hesse had found himself forced (June 13, 1541),[1] the latter, in his position of head of the German Protestants, had bound himself not to consent that Duke William of Cleves, who inclined to Protestantism, should be admitted into the Schmalkalden League ; he had also to refuse any assistance to the Duke when the Emperor Charles V took the field against him on account of the union of Guelders with Cleves. The progress of Protestantism in these districts was checked by the Emperor's victory in 1543. The formal introduction of the new faith into Metz was frustrated by the Emperor ; at Cologne too the Reformers saw all their efforts brought to naught.

The Diet of Spires, in 1544, it is true brought the Protestants an extension of that peace which was so favourable to their interests, but the campaign which Charles V thereupon undertook against François I—whom Philip of Hesse and the Schmalkaldeners were compelled by the above-mentioned compact to leave on the lurch—led to the humiliation of the Frenchman, who was compelled to make peace at Crespy on Sep. 14, 1544. There the King of France

[1] See vol. iv., p. 68 f.

promised the Emperor never again to side with the German Protestants.

Luther was also troubled by the dissensions within the League of Schmalkalden, by the refusal of Joachim II of Brandenburg, of Louis, Elector of the Palatinate, and especially of Duke Maurice of Saxony to join the League; the last sovereign's intimate relations with the Emperor were also a source of anxiety. At Wittenberg it was clearly seen what danger threatened Lutheranism should the Imperial power gather strength and intervene on behalf of the Roman Church.

The Roman Church, so Luther exclaims fretfully in his "Kurtz Bekentnis" (1545), is made up of "nothing but Epicureans and scoffers at the Christian faith." The Pope, "the greatest foe of Christ and the real Antichrist, has made himself head of Christendom, nay, the very hind-piece and bottom-hole of the devil through which so many abominations of Masses, monkery and immorality are cacked into the world."[1]

The Zwinglian "Sacramentarians"

One controversy which greatly excited Luther at this time was that with the Swiss Sacramentarians. Once more his old feud with Zwinglianism was to break out and embitter his days. When, in 1542, the elevation was abolished in the parish church of Wittenberg (to some extent out of deference to the wishes of the Landgrave of Hesse who objected to this rite), some people too hastily concluded that Luther was renouncing his own doctrine in favour of that of the Swiss; hence he deemed it necessary once more to deny, in language too clear to be mistaken, any intention to make common cause with a company, which, as he puts it, had been "infected and intoxicated with an alien spirit."

Moreover, Caspar Schwenckfeld, with the object of moving the feelings of Luther's opponents, made known to them Luther's rude and so discreditable letter.[2] The animosity of the Swiss and of their South German sympathisers now assumed serious dimensions. Luther accordingly determined to address the reply which he had been

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 417. [2] Above, p. 83.

planning for some time to the Sacramentarians as a body, declaring that that "slanderer" Schwenckfeld was not worth a single line.

He was also very desirous of once more before his death giving vigorous and lasting expression to the positive faith which he still shared and to which he was wont eagerly to fly when hard pressed by the devil. The spectre of scepticism of which, as many of his statements show, he dreaded the advent among his followers as soon as he himself had been taken away, was to be exorcised beforehand.

The writing against the Swiss is the work just alluded to, which appeared at the end of Sep., 1544, under the title "Kurtz Bekentnis vom heiligen Sacrament."[1]

After briefly disposing of their arguments, with which he had already sufficiently dealt, the work culminates in a most outspoken condemnation of the errors and arbitrary opinions of the Swiss, the most striking sentence of all being the following: "Hence, in a word, either believe everything fully or else nothing at all."[2] This was practically what the Catholic Church had said to him at his own apostasy: The principle of faith permits of no picking and choosing between the truths revealed by God and guaranteed by the Church's teaching authority; one must choose between either accepting the whole body of the Church's doctrines, or leaving her.[3]

For the rest the writing was another bad example of the boundless fury and offensiveness of his mode of controversy. In the first lines he declares: "It is quite the same to me . . . when the accursed mob of fanatics, Zwinglians and the like praise or abuse me, as when Jews, Turks, Pope or all the devils in unison scold or laud me. For I, who am now about to go down into the grave, am determined to bring this testimony and this boasting

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 396 ff. See above, p. 260 f., on the difference between Luther's doctrine on the Sacrament and that of Melanchthon.

[2] P. 415.

[3] We may compare this with some other true remarks of Luther's: "It is the way with all heretics to tamper first with only one article and then gradually to deny all." After a comparison with the ring which on the slightest break ceases to be a ring, and the bell which ever so small a crack makes to lose its sound, he proceeds: "You may say: 'Dear Luther, it is to be hoped . . . that God will not be so severe and cruel as to damn men on account of one article if they faithfully keep all the rest.' For this is the way not only that the heretics console themselves, but also other sinners. . . . In reply to this we must say that it cannot be hoped that God will overlook His poor, blind, wretched creatures' behaving so madly and proudly towards their Creator and Lord." He insists that "it is impossible to deny or blaspheme a single word without thereby accusing the Divine revelation of falsehood" (p. 419). The heretics are, according to him, godless fools whom God "will some day judge much more severely," because they have His Word on their lips.

with me to the Judgment-seat of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that I have with the utmost earnestness condemned and shunned the fanatics and Sacramentarians, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Stinkfield and their disciples, whether at Zürich or wherever else they were, according to His command, Titus iii. 10: 'A man that is a heretic avoid.'"[1]—He goes on to call the Zwinglian Sacramentarians "devourers and murderers of souls, who have an endevilled, perdevilled, supradevilled and blasphemous heart and a lying jaw." "Hence no Christian can or ought to pray for the fanatics or to assist them. They are reprobates. . . . They want to have nothing to do with me, and I want to have nothing to do with them. They boast that they have nothing from me, for which I heartily thank God: I have borrowed even less from them, for which, too, God be praised."[2]

In this writing against the Zwinglians Luther also attacks the Papacy with unspeakable coarseness. Was it perhaps that he was seeking to atone in this way for his apparent agreement with the Catholics in their belief in the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament? This agreement with the Papacy was, however, as he boasts, only due to his holding fast to the ancient doctrine, to that doctrine which the "true olden Christian Church has held for fifteen hundred years."[3] He did not bethink himself of his treatment of many other doctrines of this "true, olden Church." Moreover, even his doctrine of the Sacrament was but a shadow of the ancient one. He insisted on denying any change of substance in the Bread and on affirming that the Body of Christ is actually and everywhere in heaven and on earth present as a body. He is also known to have praised Calvin for a writing in which the latter belied the "local presence" of Christ in the Bread,[4] and that he declared his readiness to "learn something from so able a mind." Thus what he retained was but a distorted fragment of the ancient doctrine of the Sacrament, salved from the shattered treasure of his former Catholic convictions.

Calvin

Very different from that which he displayed towards Zwingli and his co-religionists was Luther's attitude towards Calvin, the head of the theocracy of Geneva, whose power in the "Swiss Rome" had developed so amazingly since 1541, when he had returned after six years' exile at Strasburg in the companionship of Bucer.

Thanks to Bucer, Calvin's opinions, which in the main had always been Lutheran, had been directed more towards

[1] P. 397. [2] P. 404. [3] P. 402.

[4] To Martin Bucer, Oct. 14, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 260: "*salutabis Dn. Ioannem Sturmium et Iohannem Calvinum reverenter, quorum libellos cum singulari voluptate legi.*" Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 577. See below, p. 401.

that form of Lutheranism represented by Bucer and Melanchthon, his earlier humanistic education making this all the easier. On account of his views some have, not so wrongly, dubbed him the "South-German Lutheran,"[1] though his stiffness and harshness were not at all in keeping with the South-German character. Being in close touch with Lutheranism he had frequently visited Germany during his theological wanderings, and as the representative of the Strasburg Protestants. He had taken a part in the negotiations at the Frankfurt Convention and at the religious conferences at Hagenau, Worms and Ratisbon.

Calvin esteemed Luther far higher than Zwingli. "If we compare them," he wrote to his friend Guillaume Farel, "Luther towers far above him, as you yourself are well aware."[2]

Calvin's doctrine, as exemplified in his frequently quoted "*Institutio religionis christianæ*" (1536) and in his later writings, like that of Luther, excludes any participation of the human will in the work of salvation; all freedom is abolished, everything being enacted by the unchangeable "*Providentia Dei*" in the deterministic sense; with him, as with Luther, Adam's fall was inevitable, owing to the divine Predestination, and so was the consequent enthralling of the whole of the human race under the bondage of sin.[3]

On the elect, however, more particularly on those who follow Calvin's doctrines and admonitions, the assurance of salvation is infallibly bestowed, just as he possesses it himself. Those thus predestined cannot be lost, while such as are predestined to hell must inevitably incur the penalty of eternal suffering; amongst the latter are not only all the heathen, but also those who oppose the new belief; they are a reprobate mass of humanity who have forfeited all right to live by rising up against God and the authorities.[4] In his doctrine of predestination Calvin, who is the more logical of the two, sets aside the distinction insisted on by Luther between the Revealed Will of God that all men should be saved

[1] F. Loofs, "Leitfaden der DG.," [4] p. 881.

[2] Feb. 26, 1540, "Calvini opp.," 11 ("Corp. ref.," p. 24: "*Si inter se comparantur, scis ipse, quanto intervallo Lutherus excellat.*" Calvin finds fault namely with Zwingli's "profane doctrine" of the sacraments. "Calvini opp.," 11, p. 438. Loofs, "DG.," [4] p. 881.

[3] Loofs, *ib.*, p. 887.

[4] He writes of the treatment of the Catholics in England: that all the Catholics who had risen in rebellion against Edward VI and refused to give up their superstition "méritent bien d'être réprimés par le glaive qui vous est commis, vu qu'ils s'attaquent, non seulement au roi, mais à Dieu." "Opp.," 13 ("Corp. ref.," 41), p. 68. W. Möller, "Lehrb. der KG.," 3^3, ed. G. Kawerau, 1907, p. 188, and still better, N. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz," p. 250.

and His Hidden Will which nullifies it. The predestinarian ideas of both are at bottom identical, but with Luther, as Friedrich Loofs expresses it, "reprobation tends to recede more and more into the background and thus to hold only a secondary place; Calvin, on the other hand, is ever and of set purpose dwelling on this background, because (according to him) it is also part of the revealed doctrine of salvation, and also because it is only another aspect of predestination.[1]

Calvin taught Justification in the same way as Luther, and, like him, denied entirely any merit to good works.

It was with unmixed joy that Luther saw "so able a mind" coming forward as a champion of the new theology against the Roman errors.

This explains how Melanchthon could announce to Bucer at Strasburg, in a note evidently intended for Calvin himself, that, though certain persons had tried to incite Luther against Calvin on account of a statement [on the Supper] which was at variance with Luther's views, "Calvin stands in high favour [with Luther]" ("*magnam gratiam iniit*"). Calvin himself with great satisfaction quoted this passage in a letter to Farel.[2] As for Luther, writing to Bucer on Oct. 14, 1539, he sent his "respectful greetings" to Calvin and mentioned that he had perused "with peculiar pleasure"[3] his writing (the "*Responsio*" against Jacopo Sadoleto in which was the incriminated statement).

When, in April, 1545, Luther glanced through a newly published Latin translation of Calvin's principal work on the Supper, "Petit traicté de la sainte cene" (1541), he observed, that the author was a learned and pious man; had Œcolampadius and Zwingli expressed themselves in this way from the beginning, then no such quarrel would have arisen. Thus Luther accepted the Genevese theologian's essay "in a friendly way and without misgiving"—though "in it, Calvin recognised a bodily presence in Luther's sense as little as before."[4] On the contrary, Calvin agrees in the main with Zwingli's denial of the Real Presence, though he

[1] "DG.," [4] p. 889.

[2] It is known only from Calvin's letter, Nov. 20, 1539, "Opp.," 10 ("Corp. ref.," 38), p. 432. Cp. Enders-Kawerau, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 261.

[3] To Bucer, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 260. Above, p. 399, n. 4.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 603 f., which also contains an account of Luther's remarks.

insists very strongly on the spiritual working of the Body of Christ enthroned in heaven on the recipients of the Supper, so strongly indeed as to speak of the " real substance of His Body and Blood " which Christ communicates.[1] As Loofs puts it : " He had come nearer to Luther's view, at least so far as terminology went." Later on, however, so Loofs adds, " the delusive terminological approximation to Luther disappeared " ; in support of this Loofs quotes from the 1559 edition of the " *Institutio* " : " Christ breathes life into our souls from the substance of His Flesh . . . though the flesh of Christ does not enter us."[2]

It was fortunate for the relations between the leaders at Wittenberg and Geneva that Luther was no longer amongst the living when Calvin expressed such a view of the Supper.

The amenities and courtesies between the two heads would have ceased and Luther's wrath would have once again asserted itself. As a matter of fact the ambiguity of which Calvin had learnt the use in Bucer's school came to an end very shortly after Luther's death, when Calvin and Farel reached an agreement with Bullinger of Zürich (The " *Consensus Tigurinus* ") ; here the Genevese without any reservation put forward the theses : " Any idea of a local presence of Christ [in the Sacrament] must be set aside . . . it is a wrong and godless superstition to circumscribe Christ as man under elements of this world."[3] The words " This is My Body " are, on the contrary, to be understood by metonymy, the name of the thing represented being transferred to the " sign."—Now it was just the fact that Zwingli and the sacramentarians made of the Eucharist nothing more than a " sign " that had kept alive Luther's indignation against them even till his last hour.

" *On the Jews and their Lies.*" " *On Shem Hammephorash,*" 1543

Amongst the prominent events of the day in Central Germany the Jewish movement deserves a place ; on the

[1] " Jesus Christ nous donne en la cene la propre substance de son corps et son sang." " Opp." 5 (" Corp. ref." 33), p. 440.

[2] Loofs, *ib.*, p. 890 f., from the " *Institutio,*" l. 4, c. 17, n. 32, " Opp.," 2 (" Corp. ref.," 30), p. 1033 : " *quamvis in nos non ingrediatur ipsa Christi caro.*"

[3] " Opp. Calvini," 7 (" Corp. ref.," 35), p. 689 *sq.* Cp. Möller-Kawerau,[3] p. 185.

one hand there was an increase in the influence and power of the Jews, and, on the other, repressive measures secured their banishment from several territories. In this movement Luther took a leading part.

In the Saxon Electorate the expulsion of the Jews had taken place in 1536 by virtue of an edict of Johann Frederick's. They were even refused the usual safe conduct through the country and threatened with the severest penalties should they be caught within the borders. In the matter of this regulation Luther sided with the sovereign. When the Jew, Josel Rosheim, a zealous advocate of his race, besought Luther repeatedly in the most urgent manner by letter to procure him an audience with the Elector, Luther not only refused to do anything for him, on the grounds that the Jews were hostile to Christianity, but even declared his intention to attack their obstinacy in print as soon as God granted him time and opportunity.[1]

It was the accounts he received towards the close of 1542 of the intrigues and the spread of the so-called Sabbatarians, a sect of Christians settled in Moravia who had been led astray by the Jews to introduce circumcision, the observance of the Saturday-Sabbath and other Mosaic ceremonies, which prompted him to undertake a slashing work against the Jews.

He had been acquainted with the sect since 1532. In his lectures on Genesis he lamented that the plague of Sabbatarianism was flourishing greatly in those districts where the madness of the Catholic rulers would not permit of the Evangel taking root; the Sabbatarians were the very apes of the Jews and were busy Judaising Austria and Moravia.[2] In March, 1538, he had sent to the press his "Brieff. . . . wider die Sabbather" in which he proves that the Messias had already come and had abrogated the Mosaic law.[3] In the preface which Justus Jonas prefixed to his Latin translation of the letter it was pointed out, that the treasure of Holy Scripture had been unlocked in this age by the preaching of the Evangel; that it was the duty of the Evangelical teachers to strive to bring the Jews into the right path by means of the

[1] For Josel and the efforts referred to, see Reinhold Lewin, "Luthers Stellung zu den Juden," Berlin, 1910 ("Neue Studien zur Gesch. der Theol. und der Kirche," ed. N. Bonwetsch and R. Seeberg, 10), p. 62 f. —Luther to Josel, June 11, 1537, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 186, also in Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 419 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 240).

[2] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 3, p. 227; cp. 4, p. 46. Lewin, *ib.*, p. 73.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 417 ff.

new light; and that the Jews in every country would be well advised to be guided by Luther's booklet.[1]

The idea of defending Christianity in detail by the light of the new knowledge of the Scriptures against the madness of the Jews took firm hold on Luther's imagination; he cherished the idea that "perchance some among them might be won over."[2] He was greatly incensed against Ferdinand, the German King, who, as he said, was laying waste the Evangelical Churches, while permitting the Jews—who in their insolence oppress the Christians—to reside in his lands.[3] On May 18, 1542, he received news of the expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia and other territories. But later in the year a writing of the Sabbatarians was sent him, which, in dialogue form, attacked him and proselytised for the sect. This Jewish movement began also to gain ground outside the borders of Moravia.

This gave the necessary stimulus "to the fanatical campaign against the Jews which the Reformer started in the winter of 1542."[4]

At the end of 1542 he published his "Von den Jüden und jren Lügen," and in March, 1543, his "Vom Schem Hamphoras."[5]

In the first he begins by proving against the Jews the Messianic character of Christ, answers their objections and lays bare their falsehoods, after which he considers how the Jews should be dealt with. In the second he discusses the Jewish legend concerning Christ's miracles, and in particular scourges the superstitions connected with the use of the "Shem Hammephorash"; he then examines the genealogies of Christ in the Gospels in order to refute the objections of the Jews in this connection, and again discusses the proofs that Christ was the Messias, at the same time defending in detail His birth of a Virgin. Both writings he addresses to the Christians in order to strengthen them in the faith in view of the dangers which threatened from Judaism.

Full of zeal for the defence of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, the coming and the benefits bestowed by the Messias, he refutes at great length the supposed learned proofs of his Jewish opponents. On the other hand, he thunders furiously against the blasphemies, the unseemly

[1] Kawerau, "Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas," 1, p. 322.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, p. 276. "Die drei Symbola," printed 1538, written early in 1537.
[3] Lewin, *ib.*, p. 66. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 419.
[4] Lewin, *ib.*, p. 74.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, pp. 99 ff. and 275 ff.

behaviour and the usury of the Jews who stood in high favour at several of the Courts; he even demands with "great earnestness" that their synagogues and private houses, the scene of their blasphemies, be set on fire and levelled to the ground ("Let whoever can, throw brimstone and pitch upon them"[1]), that their books be taken away from them and "not one page left," that their Rabbis be forbidden on pain of death to teach henceforth, and that all be hindered from "praising God publicly, thanking Him, praying or teaching";[2] further, that the streets and highways be closed against them, that they be forbidden to practise usury, and be expelled from the land unless indeed willing to earn their bread at the sweat of their brow with axe and spade, spindle and distaff. All these counsels were, of course, addressed primarily to the authorities, but, such was their nature, that they might easily have provoked the people to an unchristian persecution of their Jewish fellow-citizens. These writings, with their unmeasured vituperation and their obscenity, also bear painful witness to the deterioration of his language with advancing years.

"Fie on you," he cries, "fie on you wherever you be, you damned Jews, who dare to clasp this earnest, glorious, consoling Word of God to your maggoty, mortal, miserly belly, and are not ashamed to display your greed so openly."[3]—"Whenever you see or think of a Jew, say to yourself: Look, that mouth that I see before me has every Saturday cursed, execrated and spat upon my dear Lord Jesus Christ Who redeemed me with His precious Blood, and also invoked malediction on my wife and child and all Christians that they might be murdered and perish miserably; he himself would gladly do it if he could, if only in order to get hold of our goods; mayhap he has already to-day many times spat on the ground, as it is their custom to do, when the name of Jesus is mentioned, so that his venomous spittle still hangs about his mouth and beard and leaves scarcely room to spit again. Were I to eat, drink or speak with such a devilish mouth, I might

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 252, in "Von den Jüden." [2] *Ib.*

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 177 f., "Von den Jüden." The rest of the passage ("that Bible only should you explore," etc.) is given in vol. iv., p. 285 f., where we had to quote some of the above writings against the Jews in describing Luther's mode of controversy and the violence of his angry language. Cp. also vol. iii., p. 270. Since in the selection of these passages the object was to show to what depths Luther could descend, it is hardly necessary to point out that the passages quoted are about the strongest to be met with in these two works, the remainder being written in a somewhat calmer and more seemly vein.

as well eat and drink out of a can or vessel brimful of devils, and thus become partaker with the devils who dwell in the Jews and spit at the Precious Blood of Christ. From which may God preserve me."[1]

"I, accursed 'Goi' that I am, cannot understand whence they [the Jews] have this great art, unless it is, that, when Judas Scharioth hanged himself and his bowels gushed forth, and, as happens in such cases, his bladder also burst, the Jews were ready to catch the Judas-water and the other precious things, and that then they gorged and swilled on the merd among themselves, and were thereby endowed with such a keenness of sight that they can perceive glosses in the Scripture such as neither Matthew, nor Isaias himself, nor all the angels, not to speak of us accursed 'Goiim,' would be able to detect; or perhaps they looked into the loins of their God 'Shed' and found these things written in that smokehole."[2]

"Where are they now, those dissolute Christians who have been made or wish to become Jews? Here for a kiss! The devil has eased himself and emptied his belly again. That is a real halidom for Jews and would-be Jews to kiss, batten on, swill and adore; and then the devil in his turn also devours and swills what these good pupils spue and eject from above and from below. Hosts and guests are indeed well met and the dishes are well-cooked and served." The devil should have been an angel but "became a devil, who with his angelic snout devours what exudes from the oral and anal apertures of the Jews; this is indeed his favourite dish on which he battens like a sow behind the hedge about St. Margaret's Day; that is just as he would have it! Therefore the Jews have got their deserts." They renounced their dignity as the chosen mouthpiece of God, therefore the "devil defiles and bespatters them so much that nothing but devil's ordure bursts forth from him everywhere; this indeed is quite to their taste, and they wallow in it like the swine."[3]

In this way Luther unloads himself of his fury against both devil and Jews; two things are characteristic of his hatred of the Jews; first, that the devil is made to bear the greater share,[4] though the latter promptly shifts the burden back on to the shoulders of the Jews; secondly, that the presumption of the Jews in seeking to be first everywhere is castigated with all Luther's native coarseness.

"It is thus that the wicked, scoundrelly foe mocks at his captive Jews; he makes them say 'Schem Hamphoras' and believe and expect great things from it; he, however, means 'Scham Hamperes,' i.e. 'hither filth,' not that which lies in the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 141. "Von den Jüden."
[2] *Ib.*, p. 342 f. "Vom Schem Hamphoras."
[3] *Ib.*, p. 282. "Vom Schem Hamphoras."
[4] Cp. vol. iv., p. 285 f.

gutters, but that which forthcomes from the belly. . . . The devil has taken the Jews captive so that they must do his will (as St. Paul says) and deceive, lie, blaspheme as also curse God and everything that is God's. In return for this he makes a mock of them with his 'Scham Hamperes,' and leads them to believe that this and all their other lying and tomfoolery is something precious."[1]

The blinded presumption of the Jews is nevertheless so great that they fancy themselves far superior to the Christians. "Do you think a Jew is so badly off? God in heaven and all the angels must laugh and dance when they hear a Jew ructate, that you, accursed 'Goi,' may know for the future how fine a thing it is to be a Jew." And yet they lie and use bad language if a man ventures to hold up to public obloquy, as an "arch prostitute," one of his pious cousins.[2]—"Have I not told you above, what a grand and precious gem a Jew is; he has but to break wind, for God to dance and all His angels, and even were he to do something even grosser, it would still be looked upon as a golden Talmud; what such a man voids, whether from above or from below, that the accursed 'Goiim' are forsooth to regard as a holy thing."[3]

"Nay, were a Rabbi to ease himself into a vessel under your nose, both thick and thin, and to say: 'Here you have a delicious conserve, you would have to say you had never tasted a better dish in your life. Risk your neck and say differently! For if a man has the power to say [like the Rabbis] that right is left and left right, regardless of God and all His creatures, he can just as well say that his anus is his mouth, that his belly is a pudding-dish and that a pudding-dish is his belly."[4]

In exoneration of Luther it has been said that, in this case, in making use of such "shocking comparisons," he was not merely following his natural bent, on the contrary, "in his angry zeal he deliberately sought for them." It is perfectly true that neither his angry zeal nor his deliberate intention can be denied any more than his desire to "stir up the world against what was in itself shameful and disgusting," and his longing to do something towards its removal. But surely there was another kind of language and a different tone with the help of which he might have effected more, such, for instance, as had been used by great and pious men in the past whose inspired and glowing words contrast glaringly with Luther's hideous obscenities.

The results achieved by Luther with these two writings were but of trifling importance.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 298. "Vom Schem Hamphoras."
[2] *Ib.*, p. 224. "Von den Jüden."
[3] *Ib.*, p. 226. "Von den Jüden."
[4] *Ib.*, p. 285 f. "Vom Schem Hamphoras."

We hear practically nothing of any conversions of Jews or apostate Christians being due to them. Luther had been wise himself to declare that he did not expect any conversions to result from them. In the Saxon Electorate, however, the unjust enactment of 1536 was, on May 6, 1543, revived against the Jews by a public mandate abrogating that mitigation of it which Josel Rosheim had been successful in obtaining. "Official reports go to prove that the cruel persecution of the Jews [in the Saxon Electorate] was no mere paper measure; only after Luther's death did things settle down."[1] In Hesse a severe decree against the Jews, issued in 1543, seems to have owed its origin "to the writings of the Reformer. This being so the rebuff with which Luther met in the Electorate of Brandenburg must have been all the more annoying."[2]

One of the lasting effects of these two screeds was, that, in the subsequent anti-Jewish risings the charges there contained, and couched in language so fervid and eloquent, were constantly appealed to in vindication of the measures used. No distinction was made between what was true and what was false, or between the horrible exaggerations and the actual fact, though the unreliability of many of the statements is often quite palpable.

Even in the few passages we had room to quote the reader may have seen how Luther's charges against the Jews amount to calumnies; the Jews, he alleges, were in the habit of cursing and blaspheming God and all that is God's; "regardless of God" they made out right to be left and left right. His love of exaggeration leads him to say that all Jews curse the Christians every Sabbath, and are ever desirous of stabbing them and their wives and children. Theft and robbery he makes into crimes common to every Jew; all of them he accuses indiscriminately of murder; "all their most heartfelt sighing, hopes and longings are set on this, viz. to be able to treat us heathen as they treated the heathen in Persia in the days of Esther . . . for they fancy they are the chosen people in order that they may murder and slay the heathen . . . just as they had made this plain to the world by the way they had treated us Christians in the beginning, and would still gladly do even now were they able, yea, have often done so."[3]

It is true he refuses credulously to believe all the crimes with which rumour charged them, for instance, their poisoning of the

[1] Lewin, "Luthers Stellung zu den Juden," p. 103. [2] *Ib.*, p. 104.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 120. "Von den Jüden." Cp. pp. 182 and 230, and Lewin, p. 92.

wells.[1] The calumnies he made his own were, nevertheless, so great, that, after the magistrates of Strasburg had been repeatedly approached by Josel von Rosheim with the proposal to forbid the circulation of the two writings, they finally decided to prohibit their being printed in the city. The councillors were of opinion that the very enormity of the assertions would prove the best refutation. They wrote, that it was better to keep silence and to leave the calumnies to sink into oblivion; to this the petitioner agreed.[2]

Josel von Rosheim, the zealous spokesman of the Jews, achieved a brilliant success with the Emperor Charles V. Certain extensive privileges were guaranteed him on April 3, 1544, and were made public in 1546, whereby all the rights and liberties of the Jews were confirmed.

Nor was there any lack of condemnation of these two writings of Luther at the hands of the Protestants themselves.

On Dec. 8, 1543, Bullinger of Zürich made to Bucer his complaint already referred to, concerning the "lewd and houndish eloquence" of the Wittenberger; he adds that such effusions were unseemly in a theologian already advanced in years; no one could tolerate a work so obscenely ("*impurissime*") written, as "Vom Schem Hamphoras"; Reuchlin, were he still alive, would declare, that, in Luther, all the old foes of the Jews—Tungern, Hoogstraaten and Pfefferkorn—had come to life again [though their language fell short of Luther's]: he was sorry for Luther's murderous hatred of the Hebrew commentators and for the undue stress he laid on his own German translation, which was far from being devoid of prejudice.[3] Bullinger expressed himself much more strongly, in 1545, when the split between Zürich and Wittenberg had been accentuated by Luther's "Kurtz Bekentnis": No one writing on questions of faith and matters of grave importance had ever expressed himself in a way so utterly at variance with propriety and modesty as Luther, etc.[4]

[1] P. 182. "Von den Jüden."

[2] Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 11, p. 242.

[3] Cp. above, vol. iv., p. 325 f. Lenz, "Briefwechsel Philipps von Hessen mit Bucer," 2, p. 224, and Lewin, *ib.*, p. 98. The latter, though a Rabbi, does not mind letting his opponents, Luther included, speak for themselves.—Bullinger in the letter in question says of Luther's third writing against the Jews, viz. his "On the Last Words of David": "Everyone must be astonished at the harsh and presumptuous spirit of the man so haughtily displayed in the 'Last Words of David.' That such a theologian, after having arrived at his years, should be guilty of such extravagant acts and writings is a matter that can only be left to the just Judgment of God. The opinion of posterity will be that Luther was not only a man, but a man ruled by criminal passions."

[4] Cp. above, p. 115, and vol. iv., p. 325. Döllinger, "Reformation," 3, p. 262 f.

The Nuremberg preacher, Andreas Osiander, at that time one of the greatest authorities on Hebrew and on Rabbinic writings, wrote so strong a letter about the untruth of certain of Luther's anti-Jewish strictures that no one ventured to bring it under the Reformer's notice. Cruciger relates that Osiander afterwards withdrew some of the strongest things he had said in the letter, but that he still maintained that Luther had not in the least understood what the Shem Hammephorash meant to educated Jews.[1]

The Shem Hammephorash or "peculiar name" was, according to Luther, a cabalistic formula of the Jews, supposed to be endowed with the most marvellous magic power; it was made up of seventy-two three-lettered names of angels, themselves formed from a rearrangement of the letters of the Scripture text, Ex. xiv. 19–21, concerning the pillar of cloud that went before the Jews on their departure from Egypt. To each of these angelic names was appended a verse from the Psalter with the "great name of God, Jehovah, also called the Tetragrammaton." So great was the power of this magic formula that it could strike blind or dumb all Christians everywhere in the world, could drive them mad, nay, kill them outright, if only the words were rightly uttered and in a mood pious enough. Even the superstitious use of the Tetragrammaton alone, was, according to Luther, responsible, in the case "of the devil and the Jews," for "much sorcery and all kinds of abuse and idolatry."[2] They call it the Tetragrammaton because they are chary of pronouncing the four consonants of the all-too-sacred name of Jehovah, but, "in their heart they abuse and blaspheme God." They do not see that they are "using the Holy Name in the shameful abuse they practise with their 'Scham Hamperes.'"[3]

The cause of the mad aberrations of the Jews is, however, in Luther's eyes, due to the "Word of God not enlightening them and showing them the way." Now, however, God's Word has risen and shines brightly; it even casts its beam into those parts where the Papacy reigns . . . for there "thick darkness, lies and abominations were worshipped with Masses, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, monkery and one's own works."[4] It was a great and godly work that he

[1] Lewin, *ib.*, p. 99 f. [2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 291 ff., 296, 305.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 308. On the indecent meaning of 'Scham Hamperes,' see above, p. 406. [4] P. 309.

had undertaken in unmasking not only these but also the many Jewish abominations.

As to the sources whence Luther derived his information, he uncritically took his material mainly from anti-Jewish writings. The book "*Victoria adversus impios Hebræos*" of the Carthusian, Porchetus de Salvaticis, dating from the beginning of the 14th century, provided him with the Jewish blasphemies against Christ, and in particular with the supposed mysteries of the Shem Hammephorash; Antonius Margaritha supplied him with more recent material in his work "Der gantz jüdisch Glaub" of 1530. It is probable that he also made use of the "*Dialogus*" against the Jews by Paul of Burgos (1350–1435), which he quotes in his lectures on Genesis. He also mentions incidentally as his authorities Jerome, Eusebius, and Sebastian Münster.[1]

Comparison with an earlier Jewish writing of Luther's

A more accurate insight into the psychological and historical significance of the two screeds against Judaism is obtained by comparing them with an earlier writing of Luther's, dating from 1523, which is perfectly fair to the Jews. The comparison will lead the reader to ask what was the real reason for his extraordinary change of attitude.

Filled as yet with great and unrealisable hopes of that conversion of the whole Jewish race which he fancied he saw coming, Luther had, in 1523, published a booklet entitled "Das Jhesus Christus eyn geborner Jude sey."[2]

In it he points out that the Jews were blood-relations, cousins and kinsmen of the Saviour. No other people, so he warmly declared, had been so marked out by God, hence they must be dealt with amicably and soberly instructed out of Holy Scripture and not be scared away by pride and contempt, as had hitherto been the wont; the fools, Popes, bishops, sophists and monks, the great dunderheads, had hitherto indeed behaved in such a way that any good Christian would have preferred to become a Jew. Hence he exerts himself in this work, in a calm and friendly way, to prove to the Jews from the Bible, that their Messias had already come. At the same time he indignantly scourges "the lying tales" and false charges brought against them, as for instance, that, "to repress their stench they must have the

[1] For further particulars, see Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 314 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 45 ff.

blood of Christians." The main thing was to treat them according to Christian, not Popish, charity.

So far was he disposed to go the better to win over the Jews, that he was even desirous that Christ should not at the outset be put before them as the God-man, but merely as the Messias. He also declared in a sermon shortly after, that, when instructing a Jew on Christ, the catechumen was only to be told that Christ was a man like other men, sent by God to do good to mankind; only when the heart had been stirred to love of Him was mention to be made of His Godhead.[1]

"The Jews merely interest him," says Reinhold Lewin, speaking of this book, "as subjects for conversion; this is the standpoint from which he regards the whole Jewish question." "Should the new method not succeed and kindness prove of no avail . . . then it will not be worth while any longer to make use of it; harsher measures will then serve the purpose better."[2] The same writer also quotes the preface to the Latin translation by Justus Jonas as expressive of the wish of the Wittenbergers: "May the Jewish business speed its way as rapidly as the outspreading of the Word of God which has wrought so marvellous a change and so sublime a work of God."[3]

It is perfectly true that, had the optimistic expectations of Luther and his friends been realised, it would have been of incalculable advantage to their cause, for they would have succeeded where the ancient Church had failed. "The conversion of the Jews," says Lewin, "an idea which can be read between Luther's lines without any danger of forcing them—is to be the coping-stone of the grand edifice he had erected; the Papacy [in Luther's view] had failed, not merely because it had recourse to wrong methods but above all because its foundations rested on forgery and falsehood."[4]

The fact is, however, that no increase in the number of conversions took place. This disappointing experience, the sight of the growing insolence of the Jews, their pride and usury, not to speak of personal motives, such as certain attempts he suspected them to have made on his life at the instigation of the Papists, brought about a complete change in Luther's opinions in the course of a few years. As early as 1531 or 1532, when a Hebrew baptised at Wittenberg had brought discredit upon him by relapsing into Judaism, he

[1] Sermon of Feb. 14, 1524, *ib.*, 15, p. 447–65, p. 125 f.: He would "tell them that He [Christ] was a man like any other man, sent by God"; after this he would lead the would-be converts further. Lewin, *ib.*, p. 36. [2] Lewin, *ib.*, p. 31.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 309 f.; Kawerau, "Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, p. 92 f. [4] P. 36.

gave vent to the angry threat, that, should he find another pious Jew to baptise he would take him to the bridge over the Elbe, hang a stone round his neck and push him over with the words: I baptise thee in the name of Abraham; for "those scoundrels," so he adds, "scoff at us all and at our religion."[1]

From that time he begins to put the Jews in the same category with the Turks and the Papists.

The more he studies the text of the Old Testament, and the Old Jewish commentators, the more indignant he grows at the misrepresentations and trivialities to be met with in the works of the Rabbis. According to him, they are oxen and donkeys; they are as bad as the monks; with their droppings they make of Holy Scripture, as it were, a sink into which to empty their obscenity and stupid imaginings.[2] He is also aghast to discover that they led astray even great churchmen like St. Jerome, and Nicholas of Lyra of whom he was particularly fond.[3] What was even worse, they were ensnaring learned contemporaries who were familiar with Hebrew, particularly those who fancied they could improve upon Luther's translation of the Old Testament thanks to their closer acquaintance with the original text, men, for instance, of the type of Sebastian Münster of Basle (the pupil of the Jewish grammarian Elia Levita). Münster, according to Luther, was a regular "Judaiser," seeing that he paid heed neither to the faith, nor to the words, nor to their setting; albeit hostile to the Jews, he, too, was undermining the New Testament. Much of Luther's anger in his writings against the Jews was intended for their Judaising pupils. Hence on the publication of the work "Von den Jüden und jren Lügen" we hear him declaring: "We have been at great pains with the Bible and been careful that the sense should agree with the grammar. This has not pleased Münster. Oh, those Hebrews—including even our own—are great Judaisers; hence I had them also in mind when I wrote my booklet against the Jews."[4]

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 196. Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 131. In both the passage begins: "Should I again baptise a Jew," thus pointing to an unfortunate experience of Luther's own, which is related more in detail in Schlaginhaufen's report. In the corresponding passage in "Colloq.," ed., Bindseil, 1, p. 460, we read further: "*sicut fecit ille, qui hic Wittebergæ baptizabatur.*"

[2] Passages in Lewin, *ib.*, p. 91. [3] *Ib.*, p. 57.

[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 296.

Some special motives for his Polemics against the Jews

The real cause of Luther's deadly hostility, voiced in his later writings against the Jews, was the blasphemous infidelity displayed in their treatment of Scripture and in their life as a whole.

"The Jews with their exegesis," he says, "are like swine that break into the Scripture"; the end and object of their life and intercourse with us, is, as the movement started in Moravia proves, to make us all Jews; "they never cease trying to entice Christians over."[1] They are quite at liberty to prefer, as indeed they do, the law of Moses to the Papal decretals and their mad articles,[2] but they have no right to prefer it to the pure Evangel. Sooner than this let us have a struggle to the death!—Such were the thoughts uppermost in his mind when he sat down to pen those two writings which constitute a phenomenon in the history of literature.

On the other hand, Luther's most recent biographer is wrong when he explains the whole controversy by saying: "There can be no doubt that the radical change in his attitude on the Jewish question was an outcome of his increasing depression."[3] That, on the contrary, it was Luther's religious excitement which was the prime psychological mover is plain from many of the effusions contained in both these writings. That, however, his state of depression had some share in it is perfectly true.

"The wrath of God has come upon them," he writes in one such passage, "of which I do not like to think, nor has this book been a cheerful one for me to write, for I have been forced to avert my eyes from the terrible picture, sometimes in anger, sometimes in scorn; and it is painful to me to have to speak of their horrible blasphemies against our Lord and His dear Mother, to which we Christians are loath indeed to listen; I can well understand what St. Paul means in Romans x. 1, when he says that his heart was sore when he thought of them; such is the case with every Christian who earnestly dwells, not on the temporal misery and misfortune of which the Jews complain, but on their addiction to blasphemy, to cursing, to spitting at God Himself and all that is God's, even to their eternal damnation, and who yet refuse to listen or lend an ear but will have it that all

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 100. "Von den Jüden." Cp. the quotations given by Lewin, p. 89, n. 3.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 363 ff. Sermon of Sept. 25, 1539.

[3] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 442. But cp. p. 445.

they do is done out of zeal for God. O God, our Heavenly Father, turn aside Thy wrath and let there be an end of it for the sake of Thy dear Son. Amen."[1]

"O my God," he groans elsewhere, "my beloved Creator and Father, do Thou graciously take into account my unwillingness to have to speak so shamefully of Thine accursed enemies, the devil and the Jews. Thou knowest I do so out of the ardour of my faith and to the glory of Thy Divine Majesty, for it pierces me to the very quick."[2]

If, however, we look more closely into the matter we shall see that the "ardour of his faith" was also fed from other sources. There was, for instance, the reaction of his own protracted struggle in defence of the new doctrines and against the Papacy, a struggle which left deep marks on all his labours and on all his writings.

Towards the end of a career which had worked such untold disaster to the Christianity of the past he feels keenly the need of vindicating the dignity of Christ if only to soothe his own conscience; he was resolved to hammer it in with the utmost defiance, just as formerly he had clung to the idea that, by his doctrine, he was defending the rights of Christ against the Pope. He is now resolved again to take his stand on this, his efforts becoming the more violent the more the sight of the ruin wrought by his own work affrights him. Hence his eagerness to take advantage of Jewish attacks on the pillars of the faith in order, while triumphing over them, to enjoy the sense of his comradeship with Christ, the Son of God now so soon to come in Judgment. Here again he allows his vanity to mislead him and to paint his intervention on behalf of the great truth of Christianity as far more successful than that of any of the Popes; this helps him to close his eyes to the wounds which the inner voice tells him he had inflicted on the Christian truths and on the public life of Christendom. For was he not doing for Christ what the Pope was quite unable to do? Indeed, "the world, the Turk, the Jew and the Pope are all raging blasphemously against the name of the Lord, laying waste His Kingdom and deriding His Will; but 'greater is He that is with us than he that is with the world'; He triumphs," so he wrote at that time to some foreign sympathisers, "and

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 259. "Von den Jüden." Cp. above, vol. iv., p. 265.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 303. "Vom Schem Hamphoras."

will triumph in you to all eternity ; may He console you by His Holy Spirit in which He has called you to oneness with His Body."[1]

It is true, so he says elsewhere, that the Pope admits the existence of Christ, but, in spite of this, neither Jews nor Turks are quite so bad ; the Jews have far better arguments than the Papists for themselves and their religion ; the foundations of the latter are easily shaken ; the Papist Church is a worse " den of murderers " than Turks, Tartars, or Jews.[2]

All the more glorious and creditable to the new Evangel is therefore the victory won by Luther over the Jews ; it may serve to show the world that his school's study of the Bible could furnish the weapons to bring about such a result. The Pope, with his unbiblical treatment of the Jews, had merely succeeded in making them doubly un-Christian ; but to us God has unlocked the Holy Books, hence on us devolves the duty of pointing out to the Jews their errors.[3] Luther accordingly claims, that his "Von den Jüden" was the first real work of instruction on Judaism, one which "might teach us Germans from history what a Jew is and warn our Christians against them as against veriest devils." It was only fitting that he who had unearthed Scripture should also " wipe clean the holy old Bible from Jewish ' Hamperes ' and ' Judas-water.' "[4]

Nevertheless everything else—even his yeoman service in the cause of the Bible, and his shaming of the Papacy, which had so ineffectively struggled against the Jews—recedes into the background before his determination to crown his whole lifework by snatching from the Jewish devil the honour of Christ our one Salvation.

This was admittedly his motive for taking up his pen yet a third time.

The Third Work against the Jews, 1543

As early as June, 1543, Luther was engaged on a new polemical work against the Jews entitled " On the last words of David."[5] It is a lengthy essay on 2 Kings xxiii. 1–7,

[1] " To the venerable brothers at Venice, Vicenza, and Treviso," June 13, 1543, " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 569 ; " *Mundus, Turca, Iudaeus, Papa furunt blasphemando nomen Domini, vastando regnum eius*," etc.

[2] Lewin, " Luthers Stellung zu den Juden," p. 45, ns. 2, 3, 4. Cp. the " murderers' den " in " Werke," Erl. ed., 26, p. 40.

[3] Lewin, *ib.*, p. 77.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 72. In " Vom Schem Hamphoras." See above, p. 406.

[5] " Werke," Erl. ed., 37, p. 1 ff.

and certain other striking passages, with the object of proving that the Messias was to be a God-man and of vindicating the mystery of the Trinity.

He intended to show by these examples how helpful Hebrew learning and Bible study can be in defending Scripture against the attacks of unbelievers; he also wanted to establish that neither Jews nor Papists possessed the real key to the Bible, viz. the knowledge of Christ; "for in this all sticks, and lies, and rests: Whosoever has not or will not have this man called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom we Christians preach [the new Evangel undefiled], let him avoid the Bible; such is my conscientious advice, else he will certainly come a cropper, and become ever blinder and more crazy the more he studies."[1]

In David's final words on the Messias, Luther saw something peculiarly solemn; David, when "about to die and depart," gives his parting injunction and adds: "This is my firm belief; on this I stand fast and immoveable. . . . Hence I am joyful, and will gladly live or die as and when God wills."[2]

"Whoever can boast [like David] that the Spirit of the Lord speaks through him, and that His word is on his tongue, must indeed be very sure of his cause."[3]

In this writing the Jews are not attacked in such unmeasured language as in the two others just considered; the tone of the whole is much calmer, indeed comparatively kind. It may be that the representations made to him concerning his violence had not been without some effect.

The end, like the beginning, expresses the wish that, without suffering ourselves to be led astray by the false readings of the Jews, we should "plainly and clearly find and recognise our dear Lord and Saviour in Holy Writ."[4] This is what leads Melanchthon to praise the work as enjoyable reading, because there is nothing sweeter to the pious than to deepen their knowledge of the God-man and to learn the art of real prayer so different from that of the heathen, the Jew and the Turk.[5]

Against the Turks

The honour of Christianity and of its Divine Founder was also what Luther had at heart in the two books which in his later years he was instrumental in publishing against the Turks, viz. his "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken"

[1] *Ib.*, p. 3. [2] P. 6 f. [3] P. 11. [4] P. 104.
[5] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 164 *sq.* Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

(1541) and his new edition (1542) of an old work against the Koran, the "Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi."

In one passage of the Vermanunge he even couches this thought in the form of a prayer:

"Yes, indeed, this is our offence against them [the Turks], that we preach, believe and confess Thee, God the Father, as the only True God, and Thy Beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost as one eternal God." "Thou knowest, God the Father Almighty, that we have not sinned in any other way against the devil, Pope or Turk and that they have no right or power to punish us." Most fervently, as in the very presence of God, he declares that he must withstand the devil who is helping the Turk to set up "his Mahmed in the stead of Jesus Christ Thy Beloved Son."[1] Speaking of prayer against the Turk he makes every Christian say to God: "Thou tellest, nay, compellest, me to pray in the name of Thy Beloved Son Our Lord Jesus Christ."[2]

In this writing he strongly reprobates both the public disorders on the side of the new Evangel and the Papists' obstinate resistance to the Word of God; both would be terribly punished by means of the Turks unless people set about amending their lives and giving themselves up to earnest prayer. Now, after the Evangel had been preached for so many years, "everyone knew, thank God, what each class and individual man should do or leave undone, which, alas, formerly we did not know, though we would gladly have done it."[3] Should our prayer fail to achieve the desired object, "then let us say a longer and a better one." "How happy should we be were our prayers against the Turk again to prove of no avail, but, instead, the Last Day came—which indeed cannot any longer be far off—spelling the end of both Turk and Pope as I do not for a moment doubt."[4]

At any rate Luther might have used better weapons against the Turks than he actually did in this so-called admonition.

About the time he wrote it we hear Luther occasionally expressing a hope that the Turks may be converted to the Evangel, now shining so brightly and convincingly.

"I should like to see the Evangel make its way amongst the Turks, which may indeed very well happen." "It is quite in God's power to work a miracle and make them listen to the Evangel. . . . If a 'Wascha' [Pasha] were to

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 89.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 87.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 80.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 92.

accept the Gospel we should soon see what effect it would have on the Grand Turk; and as he has many sons it is quite likely one of them might reach it."—He despaired of the overthrow of the Turkish empire, but was fond of dreaming of the coming of a "good man who should withstand the dogma of Mohamed."[1]

"The Turk rules more mightily by his religion than by arms"; such was Luther's opinion. He had to be confronted with the belief in Christ, that belief which Luther had learnt "amidst the bitter pangs of death," viz. "that Christ is God"; in great temptations nothing could help us but this faith, "the most powerful consolation that is bestowed on us"; this same article of faith God was vindicating, even by miracles, against Turk and Pope. To this he too would cleave in spite of any objections of reason.[2]

He did not, however, patiently wait till the "good man" came who was to oppose the dogma of the Turks; he himself set about this undertaking in March, 1542.[3] After having, shortly before, become acquainted with the Koran in a poor translation, he proceeded himself to translate into German a work against the Koran, written in 1300, by the Dominican Richardus (Ricoldus). To it he appended a preface of his own and a "Treue Warnung."[4]

He had undertaken, so he says, to disclose and answer the devil-inspired "infamies" contained in the Alcoran, "the better to strengthen us in our Christian faith."[5]—This out-of-date book of a mediæval theologian was, however, hardly the work to furnish an insight into the Koran, particularly as it built far too much on badly read texts and doubtful stories uncritically taken for granted; from such defects the refutation was bound to suffer.

Some of Luther's own additions are characteristic.

Here he gives up all hope of any conversion of the Moslem; he likewise despairs of the success of the Christian armies.[6]—"Mahmet," so he teaches, "leads people to eternal damnation

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 301 f. Winter of 1542–43.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 149. June, 1540.

[3] "*Versor iam in transferendo libro qui vocatur Confutatio Alcorani Mahumetis. Deus bone, quanta est ira tua super ecclesiam, sed maxime contra Turcam et Mahumetem! Superat fidem bestialitas Mahumetis.*" To Jakob Probst, March 26, 1542, "Briefe," 5, p. 452.

[4] Preface and Warnung in "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 189 ff.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 200. Warnung.

[6] *Ib.*

as the Pope also did and still does." He reigns "in the Levant" as the Pope does "in the land of the setting sun," thanks to a system of "wilful lying."[1] "Oh, Lord God! Let all who can, pray, sigh and implore that of God's anger we may see an end," as Daniel says (Dan. xi. 36).[2]

Bad as Mahmet was, Luther was loath to see in him Antichrist; "the Pope, whom we have with us, he is the real Antichrist, with his 'Drecktal,' Alcoran and man-made doctrines." "The chaste Pope takes no wife, but all women are his. . . . Obscene Mahmet at least makes no pretence of chastity. . . . As for the other points such as murder, avarice and pride, I will not enumerate them, but here again the Pope far outdoes Mahmet." "May God give us His grace and punish both the Pope and Mahmet together with their devils. I have done my part as a faithful prophet and preacher."[3]

Words such as these were certainly as little calculated to further the common cause of the Christians against the Turks as had been the somewhat similar thoughts which, at an earlier date, he had been wont to weave into his exhortations to resist the Turks.[4]

As a last straw Luther in the "Treue Warnung" goes on to declare, that, unless Christians mend their life, are converted to the Evangel and live up to it, it is to be hoped that the Turkish arms will prove victorious.

For amongst those who "pretend to be Christians and to constitute the holy Church" there are, so he declares, so many who "knowingly and wantonly despise and persecute the known truth and vindicate their open and notorious idolatry, lying and unrighteousness." Such Christians, of whom the forces that had been raised chiefly consisted, formed, so he thought, an army which might itself well be styled Turkish. "If then two such 'Turkish' armies were to advance against one another, the one called Mahmetish and the other dubbing itself Christian, then, good friend, I should suggest you might give Our Lord God some advice, for He would assuredly need it, as to which Turks He is to help and carry to victory. I, the worst of advisers, would counsel Him to give the victory to the Mahmetish Turks over the Christian Turks, as indeed He has done hitherto without any advice from us and even contrary to our prayers and complaints. The reason is, that the Mahmetish Turks have neither God's Word nor those who might preach it. . . . Had they preachers of the Godly Word they might perhaps, some of them at least, be presently changed from swine into men. But our Christian Turks have the Word of God and preachers, and yet they refuse to listen, and from men become mere swine."[5]

[1] *Ib.*, p. 192. [2] P. 199. [3] P. 202 ff.
[4] Cp. our vol. iii., pp. 78 ff., 91 f. [5] "Werke," *ib.*, p. 196 f.

The public danger which threatened owing to the advance of the Turks caused Luther, however, about this time to promote the sale of the Latin translation and confutation of the Koran brought out under Melanchthon's auspices by Bibliander (Buchmann) of Zürich. In a popular hymn which he composed he also took care to couple the Turkish danger with that to be apprehended from the Papists. This short hymn, "which became a favourite with the German Evangelicals" (Köstlin), begins:

"In Thy Word preserve us, Lord,
Ward off Pope and Turkish sword."

The picture which Luther incidentally paints of himself in his effusions against the Jews and the Turks, receives its final touch in his last great and solemn pronouncement against Popery which the lines just quoted may serve to introduce.

The Hideous Caricatures of "Popery Pictured"

One cannot contemplate without sadness Luther's last efforts against the Papacy.

Fortunately for literature the projected continuation of the frightful book "Wider das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft" never saw the light; Luther's intention had been to make it even worse than the first part.

His final labours, aimed directly at the Pope and the Council of Trent, consisted in suggesting the subjects and drafting the versified letterpress for a number of woodcuts, designed expressly to ridicule and defame the Papal office in the eyes of the lower classes. Even apart from the verses the caricatures were vulgar enough in all conscience. Nudities in the grossest postures alternate with comicalities the better to ensure success with the populace.

An attempt has been made to exonerate him of direct responsibility for the pictures, and to set them down to the account of the draughtsman who, according to a passage in a letter of Luther's, was believed to be his friend, the famous painter Lucas Cranach.

That the whole was really a child of Luther's own mind is proved, however, by the very title-page "Popery Pictured by Dr. M. Luther," Wittenberg, 1545, as well as by his clear and outspoken statement shortly before his death to Pastor Matthias Wanckel of Halle. "I still have much

that ought to be told the world concerning the Pope and his kingdom, and for this reason I have published these images and figures, each of which stands for a separate book to be written against the Pope and his kingdom. I wanted to witness before the whole world what I thought of the Pope and his devil's kingdom; let them be my last Will and Testament." "I have greatly vexed the Pope with these nasty pictures," "Oh, how the sow will lift her tail! But, even should they kill me, they must gorge on the filth that the Pope holds in his hand. I have placed a golden thing in the Pope's hands [i.e. in the picture to be described immediately] that he may pledge them in it."[1]—Again, in a letter to Amsdorf, he alludes to a scene in which the Furies figure, saying that he had designed them ("*appingerem*"), and describing in detail what he meant the figures to stand for.[2]

Hence it is impossible to contest Luther's real authorship.

It is true that, on one occasion, he speaks of Cranach the painter as the draughtsman of one of the pictures; he may, however, have simply meant that it originated in his studio. According to expert opinion the technique of the woodcuts differs so much from the master's that they cannot be attributed to him; they may, however, have been executed by one of his pupils under his direction.[3]

We may now glance at the nine pictures which make up the "Abbildung des Bapstum," commencing with that just referred to.[4]

[1] This he said, according to Wanckel's Notes in the Wittenberg copy of the caricatures; cp. C. Wendeler, "Archiv f. Literaturgesch.," 14, 1, 1886, p. 18: "*Et sint meum testamentum.*" From "Unschuldige Nachrichten," 1712, p. 951.

[2] May 8, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 740: "*De tribus furiis nihil habebam in animo, cum eas papæ appingerem, nisi ut atrocitatem abominationis papalis atrocissimis verbis in lingua latina exprimerem.*" The word "*appingere,*" of course, merely means that he suggested the scene. See below, p. 427 f.

[3] Cp. P. Lehfeldt, "Luthers Verhältnis zu Kunst und Künstlern," Berlin, 1892. This writer says, p. 71: "Unfortunately our knowledge of Cranach compels us to say that the pictures, as they have come down to us, cannot be regarded as Cranach's work," etc. See allusion below to "Master Lucas," p. 429.

[4] Copies of the set of pictures with nine, or ten, woodcuts are to be found in the Marienbibliothek at Halle, in the Lutherhalle at Wittenberg and in the Lutherbibliothek at Worms. No. 562* f. 28 in the British Museum with *fourteen* pictures is a made-up copy, four cuts of which are not uniform with the rest of the set. [Note of the English Editor.]

The picture with the Furies to which Luther refers is that which represents the "birth and origin of the Pope," as the Latin superscription describes it. Here is depicted, in a peculiarly revolting way, what Luther says in his "Wider das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft," viz. the Pope's being born from the "devil's behind." The devil-mother is portrayed as a hideous woman with a tail, from under which Pope and Cardinals are emerging head foremost. Of the Furies one is suckling, another carrying, and the third rocking the cradle of the Papal infant, whom the draughtsman everywhere depicts wearing the tiara. These are the Furies Megæra, Alecto and Tisiphone.[1]

Another picture shows the "Worship of the Pope as God of the World." This, too, expresses a thought contained in the "Wider das Bapstum," where Luther says: "We may also with a safe conscience take to the closet his coat of arms with the Papal keys and his crown, and use them for the relief of nature."[2] As a matter of fact in this picture we see on a stool decorated with the papal insignia a crown or tiara set upside down on which a man-at-arms is seated in the action of easing himself; a second, with his breeches undone, prepares to do the same, while a third who has already done so is adjusting his dress.

The picture with the title "The Pope gives a Council in Germany" shows the Pope in his tiara riding on a sow and digging his spurs into her sides. The sow is Germany which is obliged to submit to such ignominious treatment from the Papists; as for the Council which the Pope is giving to the German people it is depicted as his own, the Pope's, excrement, which he holds in his hand pledging the Germans in it, as Luther says in the passage quoted above (p. 422). The Pope blesses the steaming object while the sow noses it with her snout. Underneath stands the ribald verse:

"Sow, I want to have a ride,
Spur you well on either side.
Did you say 'Concilium'?
Take instead my 'merdrum.'"[3]

"Here the Pope's feet are kissed," are the words over another picture, and, from the Pope who is seated on his throne with the Bull of Excommunication in his hand, two men are seen running away, showing him, as Köstlin says, "their tongues and hinder parts with the utmost indecency."[4] The inscription below runs:

"Pope, don't scare us so with your ban;
Please don't be so angry a man;
Or else we shall take good care
To show you the 'Belvedere.'"

[1] Cp. Köstlin, "M. Luther"[2], p. 614. In the 5th edition the passage is worded otherwise.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26[2], p. 175.

[3] The picture in Denifle-Weiss, p. 840.

[4] "Martin Luther"[2], p. 614, without the verse. The 5th ed., 2, p. 602, again runs differently.

Köstlin's description must be supplemented by adding that the two men, whose faces and bared posteriors are turned towards the Pope, are depicted as emitting wind in his direction in the shape of puffs of smoke; from the Pope's Bull fire, flames and stones are bursting forth.

Of the remaining woodcuts one reproduces the scene which formed the title-page to the first edition of the "Wider das Bapstum," viz. the gaping jaws of hell, between the teeth of which is seen the Pope surrounded by a cohort of devils, some of whom are crowning him with the tiara; another portrays the famous Pope-Ass, said to have been cast up by the Tiber near Rome; it shows "what God Himself thinks of Popery,"[1] yet another depicts a pet idea of Luther's,[2] viz. the "reward of the '*Papa satanissimus*' and his cardinals," i.e. their being hanged, while their tongues, which had been torn out by the root, are nailed fast to the gallows. "How the Pope teaches faith and theology"; here the Pope is shown as a robed donkey sitting upright on a throne and playing the bagpipes with the help of his hoofs. "How the Pope thanks the Emperors for their boundless favours" introduces a scene where Clement IV with his own hand strikes off the head of Conradin. "How the Pope, following Peter's example, honours the King" is the title of a woodcut where a Pope (probably Alexander III) sets his foot on the neck of the Emperor (Frederick Barbarossa at Venice).[3] It is not necessary to waste words on the notorious falsehoods embodied in the last two pictures. Luther, moreover, further embellished the accounts he found, for not even the bitterest antagonist of the Papacy had ever dared to accuse Clement IV of having slain with his own hand the last of the Staufens. Among the ignorant masses to whom these pictures and verses were intended to appeal, there were, nevertheless, many who were prepared to accept such tales as true on the word of one known as the "man of God," the Evangelist, the new Elias and the Prophet of Germany.

In the "Historien des ehrwirdigen in Gott seligen thewren Mannes Gottes," Mathesius says of Luther: "In the year [15]45 he brought out the mighty, earnest book against the Papacy

[1] See vol. iii., pp. 151 f., 355 f. The picture in Denifle-Weiss, p. 837.

[2] Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 177. Above, p. 383 f.—According to the Table-Talk ("Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 239) Luther was once shown a picture of the Pope being hanged on his keys. Possibly this is the same caricature of the Pope, which, according to Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," p. 64, he altered and amended with "*technæ veraces et odiosæ*" on Good Friday, 1538. It has no connection with the present picture on which the keys do not appear.

[3] Luther wrote a special work in 1545 on the supposed deed of Alexander III. Others with less reason take the picture to represent Gregory VII and Henry IV; the verses are of quite a general character. [Was it not rather suggested by an incident in the pontificate of Alexander's English predecessor, viz. Adrian IV? Note to English Edition.]

founded by the devil and maintained and bolstered up by lying signs, and, in the same year, also caused many scathing pictures to be struck off in which he portrayed for the benefit of those unable to read, the true nature and monstrosity of Antichrist, just as the Spirit of God in the Apocalypse of St. John depicted the red bride of Babylon, or as Master John Hus summed up his teaching in pictures for the people, of the Lord Christ and of Antichrist." "The Holy Ghost is well able to be severe and cutting," says Mathesius of this book and the caricatures: "God is a jealous God and a burning fire, and those who are driven and inflamed by His Spirit to wage a ghostly warfare against the foes of God show themselves worthy foemen of those who withstand their Lord and Saviour."[1] Mathesius, like many others, was full of admiration for the work.

The woodcuts pleased Luther so well that he himself wrote autograph inscriptions above and below a proof set, and hung them up in his room.[2]

"The devil knows well, that, when the foolish people hear high-sounding words of abuse, they are taken in and blindly believe them without asking for any further grounds or reasons." The words are Luther's own, though written at an earlier date.[3] That they applied even more to caricatures Luther was well aware, nor was this the first time that he had flung such pictures amongst the masses the better to excite them. As early as 1521, at Luther's instigation, with the help of Cranach's pencil, Melanchthon and Schwertfeger had done something of the sort in the "Passional Christi und Antichristi."[4] In a booklet of 1526, "Das Bapstum mit seinen Gliedern," containing sixty-five caricatures and scurrilous doggerel verses composed by Luther, everything religious, from the Pope down to the monks and nuns, was held up to ridicule.[5]

The use of caricature was, it is true, not unusual in those days of violent controversy, nor were Catholics slow to have recourse to it against Luther; Cochlæus, for instance, in his "*Lutherus Septiceps*" has a crude illustration of a figure

[1] Bl. 177′ and 178.

[2] Wendeler (above, p. 422, n. 1), p. 33. Lehfeldt (above, p. 422, n. 3), p. 71.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 170; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 316, in "Von der Widdertauffe," 1528.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 9, p. 701 ff. *Ib.*, the pictures. This ridicule of the Papacy greatly appealed to him ("*mire placet*"), as he writes to Melanchthon on May 26, 1521 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 162).

[5] "Werke," *ib.*, 19, p. 7 ff., with the woodcuts in which the pig plays a part.

with seven heads. But everything of this nature, his own earlier productions included, was put into the shade by Luther's final pictures of the Papacy.

At the end of his "Wider das Bapstum" Luther had ventured to hope that he would be able to go even further in another booklet, and, that, should he die in the meantime, God would raise up another man who would "make things a thousand times hotter." His threat he practically carried out in his "Popery Pictured," in what Paul Lehfeldt calls his "highly offensive and revolting woodcuts," which "certainly made things a thousand times worse seeing the appeal they made to the imagination."[1] The fact, that, "in spite of the numerous reprints," very few copies indeed have survived is attributed by Lehfeldt to the indignation felt in both camps, Lutheran and Catholic, which led to the wholesale destruction of the book.

So pleased was the Elector of Saxony with the "Wider das Bapstum" that he helped to push it; he bought twenty florins' worth of copies and had them distributed; this Luther hastened to tell Amsdorf with all the greater satisfaction, seeing that he had heard that others were expressing their disapproval of the book.[2] It may be that the Elector also helped to spread the caricatures. If we may believe a sermon by Cyriacus Spangenberg, some of Luther's own friends nevertheless made representations and begged him "to desist from publishing such figures, as of late he had caused to be circulated against the Pope."[3] Yet three years after Luther's death the fanatical Flacius Illyricus, in bringing out a new edition of the caricature of the Pope on the sow, with a fresh description of it, characterised it as a "prophetic picture by Elias the Third of blessed memory," and took severely to task all who felt otherwise.[4] He has it, that "Many who walk according to the flesh rather than in the wisdom, piety and retirement of the spirit, did a few years ago [1545] actually dare to call these and certain other like figures shameless prints, and fancies of a brainless old fool." The writer thinks he has proved, that, "far from being an outcome of wanton stupidity they proceeded from a ghostly, godly wisdom and zeal."[5]

Such attempts at vindication only prove that Luther was not alone in allowing himself to be dominated, and his mind darkened by such morbid fancies.

The psychology reflected in these much-debated woodcuts deserves more careful scrutiny.

Those undoubtedly take too superficial a view of the

[1] Pp. 67, 69. [2] April 14, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 727.
[3] Wendeler, p. 30. From Sermon 12 in "Lutherus Theander," 1569.
[4] "Erklerung der schendlichen Sünde derjenigen," etc. Eight pages, 1548. [5] Bl. A2. Denifle-Weiss, p. 841.

matter, who, in their desire to exonerate Luther, refuse to see in these caricatures anything more than the exuberant effusions of ridicule gone mad. On the other hand, some of Luther's enemies are no less wrong in failing to see that the indignation which speaks from these drawings is meant in bitter earnest.

If, as is only right, we view this frivolous imagery in the light of Luther's mental state at the time and of his whole attitude then, it will stand out as a sort of confession of faith on the part of the author, appalling indeed, but absolutely truthful, a picture of his deepest thoughts and feelings, steeped as they were in his sombre pseudo-mysticism and devil-craze. The same holds good likewise of the "Wider das Bapstum" of which this set of illustrations is a sort of supplement.

The revolting images which rise before his mind like bubbles to the surface of the fermenting tan, seem to him so true to fact that he protests that the cuts are in no sense defamatory; "should anyone feel offended or hurt in his feelings by them I am ready to answer for their publication before the whole Empire."[1]

So much had he brooded over the illustrations, that, as is shown by his answer to Amsdorf concerning the Furies, he could describe their every detail with an enthusiasm and minuteness such as few artists could equal, even when descanting on their own work. In the midst of his sufferings of body and mind and of all his toil, he finds leisure to explain to his friend how: The first Fury, Megæra, assists at the birth of the Pope-Antichrist, because she is the incarnation of hate and envy and thus shows that the Pope "as the true imitator, nay, ape, of Satan hinders all that is good"; the second, Alecto, according to classic teaching, has the special task of symbolising that "the Pope works all that is evil"; in this he is helped by the "old serpent of Paradise"; the latter it is who is to blame for all the misfortunes of the human race from the beginning, and for still "daily filling the world with new misfortunes by means of the Pope, Mohamed, the Cardinals, the Archbishop of Mayence, etc.; and who simply can't cease its sad abominations"; as for the third Fury, Tisiphone, she is passive, she arouses God's anger, whereby the tyrants and the wicked, as, for instance, Cain, Saul and Absalom, are punished for the doings of the two other Furies," etc. "Such is the devil of those possessed and of the insane, who also blaspheme God. This Fury rules more par-

[1] He spoke in much the same way to Wanckel according to the passage cited on p. 422, n. 1.

ticularly in the opinions of the Pope and the heretics and in their blasphemous doctrines which fall under a well-merited reprobation."[1]

It is characteristic of the mental attitude of the writer that, in the very next letter to the same friend, he replies to a question of Amsdorf's regarding a fox of abnormal shape recently caught; according to Luther "it might well portend the end of all things"; this end he will "pray for and await"; but "of any Council or negotiations" he is determined "to hear nothing, believe nothing, hope nothing and think nothing." "Vanity of vanities," such is his greeting to Trent; as for Germany, he can only discern "the spark of the coming fire prepared for its chastisement, the decline of all justice, the undermining of law and order and the end of the Empire." "May God remove us and ours before the desolation comes!"[2]

When in such a mood he is convinced that the fresh revelation of Antichrist in the new engravings constitute a grand service to the Kingdom of God. He knows already the exalted reward of their faith prepared for himself and his faithful followers. "I have this great advantage: my Master is called Shevlimini [see above, vol. iv., p. 46]; He told us: 'I will raise you up at the last day'; then He will say: 'Dr. Martin, Dr. Jonas, Mr. Michael, come forth,' and summon us all by our names as Christ says in John: 'And He calls them all by name.' Therefore be not affrighted." This he said shortly before his death, reviewing his last publications.[3]

By a similar misuse of the words of the Bible he invites all his followers, and that too in the name of the "Spirit," to do to the Pope just what the three rude fellows are doing over the inverted tiara of the Pope in the woodcut entitled "The worship of the Pope as God of the world." The verses below the picture are scarcely credible:

> "To Christ's dear Kingdom the Pope has done
> What they are doing to his own crown.
> Says the Spirit: Give him quits,
> Fill it brimful as God bids."

In the margin express reference is made to the solemn words of God (Apoc. xviii. 6), where the voice from heaven proclaims judgment on Babylon: "Render to her as she also hath rendered to you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup wherein she hath mingled, mingle ye double unto her."

It would surely be hard to find anywhere so filthy a parody of the sacred text as Luther here permits himself.

The same must be said of the utter hatred which gleams from every one of the pictures. Into it we gain some insight from a

[1] The letter cited on p. 422, n. 2. On the strength of this letter, Lehfeldt (*ib.*, p. 71) comes to the conclusion that Luther gave the draughtsman detailed instructions for his work.

[2] June 3, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 741.

[3] Wanckel's statement, see p. 422, n. 1.

letter of Luther's to Jonas: To console his suffering colleague he has a fling at the Council of Trent: "God has cursed them as it is written: 'Cursed be he who trusts in man.'" God, says he, will surely destroy the Council, legates and all.[1] Jonas was ailing from stone, besides being tormented with "dire fancies."[2] Luther, who himself suffered severely from stone, exclaimed to his friend Amsdorf: Would that the stone would pass into the Pope and these Gomorrhaic cardinals![3] A prey to anger and depression, to hatred, defiance and fear of the devil, he is yet determined to mock at Satan who is ever at his heels in small matters as well as in great. "I shall, please God, laugh at Satan though he seeks to deride me and my Church."[4]

Such, judging by the letters he wrote in that period, was the soil which produced both the caricatures and the "Wider das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft."

So deeply seated in Luther's devil-lore, not to say devil-mania, was the tendency that inspired the woodcuts, that, when once his conscience pricked him on account of the excessive coarseness of one of the scenes, he could not be moved to admit any more than that the drawing might be improved on the score of decency and be made to look . . . "more diabolical." The picture in question was that of the "Birth of the Pope-Antichrist." Evidently some friends had protested against the cynical boldness of the birth-scene. Luther writes to Amsdorf: "Your nephew George has shown me the picture of the Pope, but Master Lucas is a coarse painter. He might have spared the female sex as the creature of God and for the sake of our own mothers. He could well design other figures more worthy of the Pope, i.e. more diabolical; but do you be judge."[5] Later on, when Amsdorf still betrayed some scruple, Luther promised him: "I shall take diligent steps should I survive to see that Lucas the painter substitutes for this obscene picture

[1] July 1, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 743. "Unschuldige Nachrichten," 1712, p. 952.

[2] "*Imaginationes diræ*," for which reason Jonas had decided to give up wine. *Ib.*

[3] June 15, 1545, "Briefe," *ib.*: He had just started on the continuation of the "Wider das Bapstum" when, "*ecce irruit calculus meus, utinam non meus sed etiam papæ et Gomorrhæorum cardinalium!*"

[4] To Lauterbach, July 6, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 745.

[5] June 3, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 742. When he here speaks of "Master Lucas" and, in the following letter, of "*Lucas pictor*," he is certainly alluding to the celebrated Lucas Cranach. On his part in the matter see above. Luther's words mean no more than that the Master had something to do with the particular woodcut under consideration.

a more seemly one."[1] So far as is known, however, no such substitution took place, and still less was the caricature withdrawn from circulation; nor, again, would it have been at all easy even for the cleverest painter to produce something "more diabolical."

For the coarseness of the drawings there exists no shred of excuse.

Luther had indeed never disdained to be coarse and vulgar when this served his purpose; as time went on, however, his love for the language of the gutter became much more noticeable, at least in his controversial writings. To some extent this was the reaction of the impression he saw produced on the masses by his words, his growing sense of the power of his tongue being in part responsible for the ever more frequent recourse he had to this "original" mode of speech; to some extent too his obscene language and imagery were simply an outcome of his devil-craze, with which, indeed, they were in perfect keeping.

Certain admirers have sought to excuse Luther by pointing out that, after all, none of his obscenities was of a nature to excite concupiscence; this we must indeed allow, but the admission affords but a small crumb of comfort. Without finding anything actually lascivious, either in the draughtsmanship of these pictures or in the filthy language to which Luther was generally addicted, one can still regret his "peculiarity" in this respect.

That, in those days, people were more inured than our refined contemporaries to the controversial use of such revolting coarseness has been stated and is indeed perfectly true. The fact is, however, that what contributed to harden the people was the frequency with which the Protestants in their polemics had recourse to the weapon of obscenity. Who had more responsibility in the decline in the sense of modesty and propriety among German folk than the Wittenberg writer whose works enjoyed so wide a circulation? It has been pointed out elsewhere that though certain Catholic writers of that age, and even of earlier times, were not entirely innocent of a tendency to indelicacy, Luther outdid them all in this respect.[2] Nevertheless, however great the

[1] June 15, 1545, *ib.*, p. 743.

[2] Above, vol. ii., p. 152 f.; iii., p. 233 ff., and in particular, iv., p. 322 ff.

lack of refinement may have been, though the lowest classes then may have been even more prone than now to speak with alarming frankness of certain functions of the body, and though even the better classes and the writers may have followed suit, yet so far did Luther venture to go, that the humanist Willibald Pirkheimer was expressing the feeling of very many when he said, in 1529: "Such is the audacity of his unwashed tongue that Luther cannot hide what is in his heart; he seems either to have completely gone off his head or to be egged on by some evil demon."[1]

As day is to night so is the contrast between such strictures and the praise bestowed on Luther by his own side, not indeed so much for the works last mentioned as for his literary labours in general. The unprejudiced historian must admit that there is some ground for such praise (cp. xxxiv., 2). That Luther's popular writings must contain much that is really instructive and edifying amidst a deal of dross is surely clear from the favourable reception they met even in quarters not at all blinded by prejudice. In what has gone before we ourselves have repeatedly dwelt on the better elements often to be found in the non-polemical portion of Luther's literary legacy.

[1] To Prior Leib of Rebdorf, 1529, in Döllinger, "Reformation," 1^2, p. 588, and J. Schlecht, "Kilian Leibs Briefwechsel und Diarien," 1909, p. 12.

CHAPTER XXXIV

END OF LUTHER'S LITERARY LABOURS. THE WHOLE REVIEWED

1. Towards a Christianity void of Dogma. Protestant Opinions

With the concluding years of Luther's life we reach a point whence may be undertaken with advantage a survey of the character of his theological and literary labours from several sides from which we have not as yet had opportunity to approach them.

We naturally turn first of all to the religious content of his literary life-work ; here it may be advisable to hear what Protestant theologians have to say.

These theologians will tell us how many of the olden dogmas Luther, explicitly or implicitly, relinquishes, and whether and how he undermines the very idea of faith as known to Christians of old ; we shall also have to consider the Protestant strictures which assert that the doctrines, which he either retained or set up for the first time, were fraught with so much that was illogical that they may be said to bear within them the seeds of dissolution. The conclusions reached will show whether or not he was actually heading for a " Christianity void of dogma."

(*a*) *Protestant Critics on Luther's Abandonment of Individual Christian Dogmas and of the Olden Conception of Faith*

It is hard to deny that a certain amount of truth lurks in the contention of a certain modern school of Protestant thought which insists that Luther practically made an end of " the old, dogmatic Christianity."[1] Luther did not, of course, look so far ahead, nor were the consequences of his

[1] A. Harnack, " Lehrb. der Dogmengesch.," 3[4], 1910, p. 861.

own action at all clear to him, and when Catholics took pains to point them out he was not slow to repel them with the utmost indignation. Still, logic is inexorable in demanding its rights.[1]

Here we are happily able to state the case almost entirely in the words of Protestant theologians of the modern school, such as, for instance, Adolf Harnack.

"The acknowledged authorities on dogma," says Harnack, speaking of Luther's attitude towards the pillars of the Church's teaching, "have been torn down, and thereby dogma itself, *qua* dogma, i.e. the unfailing teaching institution ordained by the Holy Ghost, has been done away with. . . . The revision has been extended even beyond the second century of the Church's history and up to its very beginnings, and has everywhere been carried out radically. An end has been made of that history of dogma which started in the age of the apologists, nay, of the Apostolic Fathers."[2] Harnack therefore, in his detailed work on the history of dogma, refrained from dealing with any theologians later than Luther, instead of following the usual course among Protestant authors, and giving an account of the development of doctrine in later Protestantism and among Luther's followers. He pertinently asked: "How can there be in Protestantism any history of dogma after Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament and his great reformation writings?"[3]

Addressing the representatives of Lutheran "dogmatic theology," Harnack says: "Luther's reformation created a new point of departure for the development of the Christian belief in the Word of God"; "it set aside every form of infallibility that might have offered an outward assurance for one's belief, the Church's infallible organisation and infallible tradition and the infallible code of Scripture. Thus an end was made of the conception of Christianity from which dogma had sprung, viz. the Christian faith, the sure knowledge of the final causes of all things and thus of the whole Divine scheme of salvation. Christian faith has now become merely a firm assurance of receiving forgiveness of

[1] Cp. the Protestants already quoted, vol. iii., pp. 8, 15–19; vol. iv., p. 483 ff.; see also above, p. 9 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 861.

[3] The words still occur in the 3rd ed. of the "Lehrb. der Dogmengesch.," 3, p. 810. In the 4th the ending is different.

sins from God, as the Father of Jesus Christ, and of living under Him in His kingdom. This at the same time spells the ruin of any infallible dogma; for how can any dogma be unchangeable and authentic, thought out and formulated as it was by finite men, living in sin, and devoid of every outward guarantee?" If, nevertheless, Luther accepted and maintained certain aspects of ancient dogma, he did so, not as establishing "side by side with faith a law of faith based on particular outward promises," but rather "from his unshaken conviction that much of this dogma corresponded exactly with the Gospel or Word of God, and that this correspondence was self-evident"; "as dogma, it did not constitute a rule."[1]

In some respects, for instance in this very matter, what Harnack says stands in need of correction. He is at times too fond of making out his own Christianity without dogma to have been also that of Luther. We just heard him say that the remnant of olden dogma which Luther preserved, "as dogma, did not constitute a rule." He would, however, have been nearer the truth in saying that, *logically*, as dogma, *it ought not to have* constituted a rule. There can be no doubt that Luther—as will be shown below—insists, though in contradiction with other "basic ideas and with the spirit of his reformation," that the Christian verities which he leaves standing must be embraced as revealed articles of the Christian belief and indubitable truths of faith. Even where he does not insist upon this he still takes it for granted that faith in the whole of revelation ("*fides historica*") precedes that faith which consists in the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Even Harnack has to admit, that, with Luther, "dogma *qua* dogma, remains to some extent in force" owing "to the logic of things."[2]

Luther, according to another passage in Harnack, "under the pressure of circumstances" and the storms raised against him by the fanatics and the Anabaptists, was drawn into a dogmatising current of which the issue was the Augsburg Confession. To the question: Did Luther's reformation do away with the ancient dogma? we must reply, that, at least, it "demolished its foundation—as indeed our Catholic opponents rightly object against us—that it was a mighty principle rather than a new doctrine, and that its subsequent history through the age of Orthodoxy, Pietism and Rationalism down to the present day is less a falling away than a natural development."[3]

[1] *Ib.*, 3[4], p. 682 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 684. [3] P. 685.

Even before Harnack's day this was virtually the standpoint of some of the best Protestant judges. It had been perceived long before that the purely Evangelical theory led much further from the ancient dogmas than Protestant orthodoxy was disposed to admit. Even according to so conservative a theologian as Johann August Neander, "the spirit of the Reformation did not at once attain to a clear consciousness of itself"; Luther indeed, even here, "had reached the consciousness of the pure Evangelical belief, thanks to the principle of a faith which is a free outgrowth of the Divine power within; yet, owing to the controversies on the Supper and to the Peasant War, this clear consciousness again became eclipsed."[1] Neander finds the best statement of Luther's new ideas in those works which are most radically opposed to the traditional teaching of the Church of old. Albert Ritschl, the well-known leader of the free Protestant school, likewise declared: "The Lutheran theory of life has not remained true to itself; it has been hemmed in and dulled by the stress laid on objective dogma. The pure doctrine as taught in the schools is in reality merely a passing, not the final, form of Protestantism."[2]

All these critics, Harnack in particular, though blaming Luther for not drawing the right conclusions, are nevertheless at one in their outspoken admiration of the powerful thinker and brave spokesman of the new belief, and particularly of those theses of his which approach most closely their own ideal of an unfettered theology. In their opinion Luther is to remain the hero of yore, though his garb and attitude will no longer be the same as those to which Protestantism had previously been accustomed. It is perhaps not superfluous to mention this because otherwise the strong things some of the critics say might, taken together, give the impression that their main aim and endeavour was to decry Luther. Probably enough Harnack and his friends failed to foresee how unfavourable a view their censures, taken in the lump, might produce of Luther's person and work. Harnack, however, in one passage, pays a strange tribute to Luther's conservatism, one, no doubt, which would appeal to the Reformer's more old-fashioned friends. He points out, that, "we owe it to him, that, even to the present

[1] "Evang. Kirchenztng.," 1830, p. 20.
[2] "Gesch. des Pietismus," 2, pp. 88 f., 60 f. Cp. 1, pp. 80 f., 93 f.

day, these formularies [the olden creeds] are still in Protestantism a living power" ; nay, such is his ignorance of the state of things in Catholicism, that he is convinced that it is only in Protestantism that these creeds still "live," whereas, "in the Roman Church, they are but a dead and obsolete heirloom" ; Luther, according to one bold dictum of Harnack's, was really "the restorer of ancient dogma."[1]

Among the olden doctrines thrown over by Luther his Protestant critics rightly instance the Canon of Scripture and the right of the Church to interpret the Bible. They corroborate strikingly from Luther's writings the results which we reached above,[2] a circumstance which may surprise Protestant readers.

If, according to Luther, the doctrine of the oldest confessions of faith are only to be retained because they can be directly proved from the Bible, then the Bible itself with all its books, so such Protestants argue, must stand firm and inviolable. Now, awkwardly enough, Luther himself saps the authority of the Canon.

"If the attitude is justified which Luther takes up in his famous Prefaces to the various books of the New Testament," says Harnack "(cp. prefaces to the Epistle of James, to the Epistle to the Hebrews and to the Apocalypse), then an end is made of the infallible Canon of Scripture. It is here of the utmost importance historically, though in itself a matter of indifference, that we find Luther, especially after the controversy on the Supper, making statements to the effect that every letter of Scripture is fundamental to the Christian faith ; the flagrant contradiction involved in the assertion that a thing holds and at the same time does not hold can only be solved by saying that it does not. The same follows from Luther's views on faith, for, according to him, this is produced by the Holy Ghost through the *preaching* of the Word of God. To-day too, all Protestants are agreed that historical criticism of Scripture is not unevangelical, though this unanimity of opinion extends only as far as the 'principle,' and many refuse to carry it out in practice."[3]—

[1] "Lehrb. der DG.," 3⁴, p. 814. Harnack's statement concerning the "life" of the old formulas of the faith in Protestantism is significant: "We have to thank Luther, that the formulas of the faith possess a living force in Protestantism to-day, and, indeed, in the West, nowhere else. Here men live in them, vindicate them or oppose them." *Ib.*

[2] See above, p. 356 ff. Cp. vol. iv., p. 398 ff.

[3] "Lehrb. der DG.," 3⁴, p. 683, n. 1.

"Luther, at the very time when he was waging so brave a war against the authority of the Councils, also opposed Scriptural infallibility, and, indeed, how could he do otherwise? . . . There can be no doubt that Luther's attitude towards the New Testament, as we find it set forth in the Prefaces and in one or two other passages, is the correct one, i.e. that which really tallies with his belief."[1]

As F. Loofs points out, Luther leaves us without any outward guarantee for the authority of the Canon of the Bible.[2] Loofs quotes, for instance, Luther's saying: "Hence God must tell you within your heart: This is God's Word."[3] "Luther's criticism," the same writer says, "did not spare even those books which he allowed to be truly prophetic or apostolic. . . . He frankly admitted the human element in Scripture."[4]

If Luther's fundamental opposition to the faith once delivered is already apparent from his criticism of the Bible, still more is this the case when we come to look into the freedom he allowed in the interpretation of the sense of the Bible.

As Harnack puts it: In Luther's view "the Church is based on something which every Christian, no matter how humble, can see and test, viz. on the Word of God as apprehended by pure reason. This, of course, was tantamount to a claim to ascertain the true verbal sense of Holy Scripture. . . . But Luther never foresaw how far this rule would lead."[5]

Luther himself often put his principle to such arbitrary usage as to prove a warning to others (above, vol. iv., pp. 406 f., 418 f.), and to exclude the possibility of any settled dogma. "The flagrant contradiction," says Harnack, "into which he was led by criticising the Bible whilst all the time holding the idea he did about its inspiration, he contrived to explain away by reading the Evangel itself into texts which presented a difficulty."[6] "In Holy Scripture, the infallible authority, only that was to be found, which on other grounds was already established as the true doctrine."[7]

Hence in the matter of the Bible, so Harnack has it, "Criticism, in order to be according to Luther's mind, would have to go against him in the interests of faith."[8]

Luther's abandonment of the Church's standpoint with regard to the Bible is closely bound up with his renunciation of the Church's teaching office, of the hierarchy and of all respect for tradition. This meant, as modern Protestant critics admit, the destruction of the whole theory of tradition and, in fact, of all ecclesiastical authority, though, on Harnack's own admission, ancient Church writers, especially "subsequent to Irenæus," rely much on such authority.

[1] *Ib.*, p. 858. [2] Leitfaden der DG."[4], 1906, p. 743.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 230, Kirchenpostille.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 745 f. [5] "Lehrb. der DG.," 3^4, p. 827 f.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 868. [7] P. 879. [8] P. 879.

"Luther was antagonistic to all these authorities," says the same scholar, "to the infallibility of Church, Pope, and Councils, to every constitutional right of the Church to pronounce on the truth and, on principle, to all the doctrinal formularies of the past."[1] His later writing: "Von den Conciliis," etc. (1539) proves this.

Nor have we yet exhausted the list of grievances against Luther. Not only did he forsake the ancient teaching on justification, merit and works, but he even declared war on human free will, though belief in its existence is a truth of natural philosophy and though the Church had ever held it in the highest esteem. He put aside in its primitive form the basic dogma of original sin. The doctrine of actual sin and its distinction into mortal and venial found no favour with him,[2] nor did the related doctrine of the existence of a purgatory. He completely destroyed the teaching of antiquity on Grace by his new discovery of the law of absolute necessity which rules all things, not excluding even the actions of the human mind and heart; according to Luther "Grace is the fatherly disposition of God towards us, Who for Christ's sake calls sinful man to Him, accepts him and wins his confidence through faith in the *Christus passus*."[3] This fatherly disposition of God no man can ever in the least resist if destined by the Divine Omnipotence to receive the faith; those, however, who are not numbered among the elect, know not any such invitation, or rather constraint, for the secret Will of God unfailingly dooms them to damnation.[4]

After giving the above definition of Grace, Harnack asks, "What room then is there for a Sacrament?" For Catholics the Sacraments were pillars of the Church's life and of her teaching. With them Luther was perfectly willing to dispense.

"He not only strove," says Harnack, "to break away completely from the ancient or mediaeval conception, but he actually brought it to nought by his doctrine of the one sacrament, which is the Word."[5] The Sacraments being to him a "peculiar form of the saving Word of God, viz. of the realisation of the

[1] P. 858.
[2] For the reason why, see J. Mausbach, "Die kathol. Moral und ihre Gegner," 1911, pp. 215 ff., 229 f.
[3] "DG.," 3⁴, p. 852.
[4] Cp. Mausbach, *ib.*, p. 137 ff.
[5] "DG.," 3⁴, p. 868.

'*promissio Dei*,' he reduces them to two (three), or, indeed, to one, viz. the Word of God. He showed that even the most enlightened Fathers had had but a dim notion of this so important matter. . . . Having practically laid the whole system in ruins, he rests again on the one, simple grand act, which is constantly being repeated in every Christian's life, viz. the awakening of faith thanks to the '*gratia*.'"[1]

Luther turned his back not only on the ancient teaching concerning the Sacraments, particularly the Sacrifice of the Mass, but also on the whole outward worship of the Church.

"His attitude towards Divine Worship in the Church was a radical one. Here too he destroyed not only the mediaeval tradition, but even that of the ancient Church such as we may trace it back right into the 2nd century. The public worship of the Church, to him, is nothing more than the worship of individuals united in time and place. . . . The priest and the sacrifice in the usual sense of the terms are done away with, and all worth is denied to those specific ecclesiastical actions which were formerly held to be both wholesome and necessary." "The 'divine service,' particularly that of the Word, in which he nevertheless wished the congregation to take part," "can have no other motive . . . than to promote individual worship, for God deals with us only through the Word which is not tied up with any particular persons."[2] Hence public worship does no more than "edify faith through the preaching of the Divine Word and the common offering of prayer and praise."[3]

Of vast importance in this change and even more far-reaching in its consequences was Luther's abrogation of the ancient conception of the Church. As bound up with it, he also harshly set aside the invocation of Saints, that vital element of the olden worship.

The ancient teaching on perfection had to make room for new theories, for it seemed to him to lay too much stress on man's own works.[4] And yet "we cannot but admit," says Harnack, "that Luther's efforts to create a new ideal of life were not characterised by any clear discrimination." The reason may be "that the times were not yet ripe for it." In those days of public stress "religion's chief business was to bring consolation amidst the miseries of life. To heal the soul oppressed with sorrow for sin and to alleviate the evils in the world," this was what was mainly aimed at.[5] This, however, was scarcely to do justice to religion and to its sublime tasks.

According to Luther the Church had, even from the

[1] P. 851. [2] P. 855. [3] P. 856.
[4] Cp. Mausbach, *ib.*, p. 243 ff. [5] "DG.," 3[4], p. 834.

outset, given to human reason a larger sphere than was due to it. Even at the cradle of the Church Christian philosophy had taken her stand, and, with her torch of reason, had pointed out the road to faith. Luther, however, conceived "a distrust of reason itself not to be explained simply by his distrust of it as the main prop of self-righteousness. He grew hardened in his bold defiance of reason, surrendering himself to that suspicious Catholic [!] way of looking at things, which reveres the wisdom of God and sees the stamp of the divine truth in paradox and in the *contradictio in adiecto*. . . . No one, however, can despise reason and learning with impunity, and Luther himself was punished by the darkening of his own views on faith."[1] "That is a dangerous kind of theologism which fancies that the knowledge which comes from worldly education may simply be ignored. The reformers were too ready to cut themselves adrift from worldly culture where the latter seemed to trench on the domain of faith. . . . The Reformation buried beneath a mass of hatred and injustice much of the valuable learning the age possessed and thereby made itself responsible for the later crises of Protestantism."[2]

"Luther," says Loofs, "by laying stress on that antithesis between human reason and the divine 'foolishness,' which was so intimately bound up with his own deepest and most fundamental views (and who ever thundered more loudly against the 'Frau Hulda' of natural reason, that 'devil's whore' and 'arch enemy of the faith' than did Luther?), imposed on his following the old Catholic idea (which he himself had overthrown) of the verbal inspiration of the Canon, and did so so thoroughly that after-ages were unable to shake themselves free of it. Nay, by rightly proscribing any allegorical exegesis, he made the burden of this old Catholic heritage even more oppressive in Protestantism than it had ever been before."[3]

Depreciation of reason, had, in Luther's case, a bad effect on his whole teaching concerning God. As far back as theology went this had formed the centre of religious

[1] P. 869.

[2] P. 870 f. Harnack congratulates Luther on his opposition to the fanatics, and concludes: "The German Reformation banished the fanatics, but, in their stead, it had to face the rationalists, the atheists and modern positive theology," p. 871.

[3] "Leitfaden der DG.," [4], p. 747.

discussion. The Fathers had by preference dwelt on questions which concerned God, His Oneness and Triunity, His attributes and His relations with the world and man. Luther, according to the admission of Protestant critics, introduced here certain arbitrary and very unfair limitations. It was his wish, as he frequently declares, that God should be meditated on only as Jesus Christ our Consoler and our Saviour. He has a strange and seemingly instinctive aversion to concerning himself with the Almighty Being, in Whom nevertheless " we live, and move, and are." The *Deus absconditus* appals him. According to him it is impossible to " treat of Predestination without being crucified and suffering the pains of death, or without loss to ourselves and secret anger against God." Predestination " determines in the first instance who is and who is not to believe, who is and who is not to be saved from sin " ; of this Luther cannot speak without at the same time solemnly emphasising that it is only thanks to it that we can " hope to conquer sin," as otherwise the devil, " as we know, would soon overpower us all." Yet we ought not, like the " reprobate spirits," " explore the abyss of Divine Providence," because otherwise we shall either " be brought to despair or kick over the traces." The old Adam must " have been put to death before being able to endure this and to drink the strong wine," i.e. a man must first have learnt, like Luther, " to stake all in God," and " defy " all things in Him.[1]

Thus it comes about that Luther ladles out reproaches indiscriminately to the philosophers who occupy themselves with God as known to reason, and the theologians who pursue the supernatural knowledge of God.

" Often enough did Luther deride as a product of blind reason," writes Harnack, " that knowledge of God, which instead of thinking of God in Christ alone, ' sophistically ' enumerates His attributes and speculates on His will, viz. the whole ' metaphysical ' doctrine of God."[2] If " God be considered apart from Christ," then He appears, according to Luther, merely as the " terrible Judge from Whom we can await nothing but punishment."[3]

According to Luther, " there is, outside of Christ, no certainty concerning the Will of God " ; for the secret Will of God threatens us with the dreadful sword of predestination to hell. Hence

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 134 f. Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. [2] " DG.," 3^4, p. 849. [3] *Ib.*, p. 835.

Harnack even goes so far as to say, that what is presupposed in Luther's theories on the assurance of salvation is a belief "not in God *in se*—for God *in se* belongs to the Aristotelians—but rather in the God Whom the Holy Ghost reveals to the soul as manifest in Christ."[1]

"God *in se*" and "God *quoad nos*" are two different things. By establishing such a distinction Luther "sets himself at variance with all theology as it had existed since the days of the apologists; here his aversion to the olden dogma is even more evident than in his reprobation of certain of its parts. Again and again, whenever the occasion arises, he repudiates what the olden theology had said of God and Christ, of the Will and Attributes of God, of the two natures in Christ, etc., with the remark: 'This He has *in se*. Thereupon he immediately proceeds, with the words 'But, *quoad nos*,' to introduce his own new view, which to him is the main thing, if not the whole."[2]

Such doctrines as have nothing to do with the justification of the sinner or the "confession of faith, as a personal experience," recede so much into the background that Harnack feels justified in saying: "Though, under the formulas 'God *in se*,' 'the Hidden God,' 'God's Hidden Will,' Luther left these old ideas standing, still they had practically ceased to exist as doctrines of faith. Of this there can be no doubt. That he did not throw them over completely is due to two facts, on the one hand to his impression that he found them in the Bible, and, on the other, to his never having systematically thought out the problems involved."[3] It must, however, be noted, that, as will be seen more clearly when we come to discuss Luther's idea of faith, he was by no means ready to allow that such dogmas were not real "articles of faith." This may be what leads Harnack here to say that they had "practically" ceased to exist as "actual articles of faith."

In connection with the dogmas touching God it must not be lost to sight that Luther, by his doctrine of predestination, of man's unfreedom and of the inevitability of all that occurs, really endangered, if indeed he did not actually destroy, the Church's olden conception of God as the Highest and Most Perfect Being. The cruel God of absolute predestination to hell is no longer a God worthy of the name.

"Nor can it be gainsaid," writes the Protestant theologian Arnold Taube, "that, given Luther's idea of God and His Om-

[1] P. 836.

[2] P. 859 f. Harnack refers here to the passage in Luther's Works, Weim. ed., 16, p. 217; Erl. ed., 35,, p. 207 f. (Exposition of certain chapters of Exodus): "The sophists [Schoolmen] depicted Christ as God and as Man. . . . But Christ is not called Christ because He has two natures. What does this matter to me? But He bears this grand and consoling name on account of the office and work He undertook. That He is by nature God and Man concerns Himself, but that He is my Saviour and Redeemer is for my comfort and salvation."

[3] "DG.," 3^4, p. 860.

nipotence, the negation of man's free-will is a simple and natural consequence." "Luther's conception of God is at variance with the ethical personality of the God of Christianity, just as Schleiermacher's whole pantheistic scheme of theology is useless in enabling us to grasp a religion so eminently moral as Christianity." "Schleiermacher was quite logical in carrying to their consequences Luther's ideas on predestination and free-will." Luther's idea of God, according to Taube, is simply "determinist." "The negation [of free-will] can be escaped only by a theory of the Divine Omnipotence which regards God as controlling His own Power and thus as practically exercising restraint over Himself and limiting His Power. This, however, was not Luther's theory, who takes the Divine Omnipotence to signify that which works all in all."[1]

To an outsider it sounds strange to hear Harnack and others affirm that Luther swept away all the positive doctrines of antiquity; no less strange is it to see Luther, the furious opponent of Catholicism, being made by men who call themselves his followers into an advocate of the Rationalism which they themselves profess. In the interests of Rationalism these theologians take as their watchword Wilhelm Herrmann's dictum of Luther's doctrine of penance: "We must strive to push ahead with what Luther began and left undone." The least they demand is, that, as Ferdinand Kattenbusch puts it, Protestant theology should hold fast to the "earlier" Luther, to those days "when Luther's genius was as yet unbroken." In this wise they contrive to wrench away Luther from the foundations of that faith to which he still wished to remain true and which the "orthodox" at a later date claimed him to have ever retained.[2]

It is well known how, following in Ritschl's footsteps, Harnack's ability, learning, and outspokenness have proved extremely awkward to the more conservative theologians. He "carried on Luther's interrupted work," declares Herrmann, and set up again in all its purity Luther's early conception of faith against a theology which had been stifled in orthodoxy and pietism.[3]

[1] "Luthers Lehre über Freiheit und Ausrüstung des natürlichen Menschen bis 1525. Eine dogmatische Kritik," Göttingen, 1901, pp. 19 f., 49.

[2] Cp. A. Galley, "Die Busslehre Luthers und ihre Darstellung in neuester Zeit," 1900, Introd., p. 1 ff., where the quotations in question occur.

[3] *Ib.*

We must, however, in the light of Protestant criticism, examine a little more closely Luther's attitude towards the ancient Christian conception of faith.

Starting first of all from faith subjectively considered and examining Luther's doctrine of the personal appropriation of the content of faith, we immediately find ourselves brought face to face with his doctrine of justification, for he has scarcely anything to say of the faith of the individual save in so far as this faith operates justification. Here all the other truths to be believed tend to disappear from his purview and one only truth remains, viz.: Through Christ I am pleasing to God. It is no wonder if many of his followers, even to the present day, see in this doctrine of the certainty of having in Christ a Gracious God, the only dogma handed down by Luther. Does he not, for instance, in one of the most widely read passages of his works, viz., in the Preface to Romans in his translation of the New Testament, concisely define faith as a "daring and lively trust in the grace of God, so strong that one would be ready to die for it a thousand times over"? "Such a trust makes a man cheerful, defiant and light-hearted in his attitude towards God and all creatures; such is the working of the Holy Ghost by faith." "Faith is the work of God in us whereby we are transformed and born anew in God."[1]

Again, if we take faith objectively, i.e. as the sum-total of revelation, then again, at least according to many passages, faith must be merged in the one consoling conviction that we receive the forgiveness of sins from God in Christ.

"The Reformation," says Harnack quite rightly, regarded all the rest of dogma as little more than "a grand testimony to God, Who has sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to liberate us from sin, to save us and set us free. Finding this testimony in dogma, every other incentive to determine it more accurately disappeared." It is, however, important to note, that "ancient dogma was not merely the witness of the Gospel to a Gracious God, to Christ the Saviour, and to the forgiveness of sins"; it comprised a number of other profound and far-reaching doctrines also binding upon all, "above all a certain knowledge of God and of the world, and a law of belief." According to Harnack, however, "faith and this knowledge of God and law of belief were unguardedly jumbled up." In short, "a conservative attitude towards olden dogma is not imposed on the Reformation by its principles."[2]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 124 f. [2] "DG.," 3⁴, p. 684 f.

" The orthodoxy of the Luther-zealots of the 16th century had its basis in the reformers' retention of a series of old Catholic presuppositions and dogmas which were really in disagreement with their own fundamental ideas."[1] " Thus," proceeds Harnack, " the Reformation, i.e. the conception of the Evangelical faith, spells the end of dogma unless indeed, in the stead of the old-time dogma, we put a sort of phantom dogma." The Reformation replaced the demand for faith, which corresponds with the law, by the freedom of the children of God, who are not under the constraint of the law of belief but rejoice in the gift bestowed on them, viz. in the promise of the forgiveness of sins in Christ.[2]

In this, again, there is much that is true, even though we may not be willing to subscribe to all the author says. Luther undoubtedly lays undue stress on those tenets of the faith which seem to him to refer to justification and spiritual freedom, and he does so to the detriment of what remains. " Hence the Gospel," Luther says for instance, " is nothing else but the preaching of Christ, the Son of God and the Son of David, true God and Man, Who by His death and again-rising from the dead has overcome sin, death and hell for all those who believe in Him." The Evangelists, so he says, describe the conquest of " Sin, death and hell " at great length, the others " more briefly like St. Peter and St. Paul " ; at any rate the " Gospel must not be made into a code of laws or a handbook."[3] This was indeed to raise the standard of revolt against doctrine. Well might Adolf Hausrath, in a passage already quoted, speak of Luther as " the greatest revolutionary of the 16th century."

The question touched upon above deserves, however, to be looked into still more closely in the light of what other more moderate Protestant theologians say.

Gustav Kawerau, speaking from such a standpoint, points out that Luther " runs the risk of confusing the Evangelical view of faith with that which sees in faith the acceptance of a string of doctrinal propositions, i.e. with that faith which is made up of so and so many articles, all of such importance that to reject one involves the dropping of the others."[4]

This is so true that the historian and theologian in question rather understates the case by saying that Luther merely " runs the risk." It is no difficult task in this connection to instance definite statements to this effect made by him, or even to enumerate the actual " articles " of faith he regarded as essential. In No. 12 of the articles of Schwabach (Torgau) he says, as Kawerau himself points out: " Such a Church is nothing else than the faithful who hold, believe and teach the above articles and propositions. . . . For where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are rightly used, there we have the holy Christian Church."[5]

[1] Fr. Loofs, " Leitfaden der DG.," [4], p. 463. [2] *Ib.*, p. 698 f.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 112. Preface to the New Testament.
[4] " Luthers Stellung zu Erasmus, Zwingli," etc. (reprint from the " Deutsch-evang. Blätter," 1906, Heft 1–3), p. 28.
[5] " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 181 ; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 343.

Amongst such articles Luther, following the example of the oldest Creeds, includes even the Virginity of Mary.[1]

It was to this that the theologian, Otto Scheel, recently alluded when compelled to make a stand against those theologians who, particularly during the years 1519–1523, miss in Luther any adherence to the articles of the faith. Scheel appeals to what Luther says of Mary's Virginity in his German version of his "*De votis monasticis*" (1521 and 1522). In one passage Luther, referring to the thesis that every single article of faith must be believed, otherwise, no matter how earnest and virtuous be one's life, everlasting damnation is certain, brings forward as an instance our Lady's virginity: The religious, in their "bawdy-houses of Satan" [the monasteries], by their blasphemous vows deny the whole Gospel truth, consequently far more than merely that article concerning Mary. Hence they cannot be saved even did they possess "Mary's virginity and holiness." "Here we have," rightly concludes Scheel, "even as early as 1521–22 a view of faith which does not differ materially from that which we meet with in Luther after the controversies on the Sacrament." This, however, means, according to him, "that we must regard Luther's development in a light different from that now usual."[2]

Which then does Scheel hold to be the correct view? He finds in Luther at all times contradictions which admit of no escape: "The contradictions which clearly exist at a later date in Luther's life's work were, in point of fact, always latent within him. . . . This is equivalent to saying that we must regard Luther's work as a whole, and that, too, just in its most vital parts, as one marred by contradictions which it is impossible to explain away."[3]

Since Luther's demand that all the articles of faith should be accepted without distinction was one which he had taken over from Catholicism, we should, continues Scheel, "seek in the Middle Ages the clue to his attitude instead of assigning to him the solution of modern problems as some are disposed to do." In this, however, Scheel is proposing nothing new, but rather something that stands to reason; the method he suggests has, moreover, always been followed by Catholic critics of Luther's theology.

Catholics found without difficulty plentiful statements of Luther's in support of the inviolability of the whole chain of olden dogma, so great had been the influence exerted over him by the convictions of his youth. It was an easy matter for controversialists to turn such statements

[1] Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 136.

[2] "Luthers Werke," ed. Buchwald, etc., Suppl. vol. ii., p. 44, N. 54 to Luther's "De votis monasticis," "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 583, "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 252: "*Si quis Mariam neget virginem, aut alium quemvis singularem articulum fidei non crediderit, damnatur, etiam si alioqui ipsius Virginis et virginitatem et sanctitatem haberet.*"

[3] *Ib.*, p. 44 f.

of his against Luther himself, the more so, since, eminently justified though they were within Catholicism, they were utterly out of place on his mouth and furnish a striking condemnation of his own rash undertaking—a fact to which he, however, refused to open his eyes. For instance, in the very evening of his days when he himself could look back on his destruction of so many of the dogmas of the olden Church, speaking to the Sacramentarians, Luther says of the traditional doctrines: "This is what I thought, yea and said too, viz. that the devil is never idle; no sooner has he started one heresy than he must needs start others so that no error ever remains alone. When the ring has once been broken it is no longer a ring; it has lost its strength and is ever snapping anew. . . . Whoever does not or will not believe aright one article assuredly does not believe any article with a true and earnest faith. . . . Hence we may say straight out: Believe all, or nothing! The Holy Ghost will not allow Himself to be divided or sundered, so as to teach or make us believe one article aright and another awry." "Otherwise," so he concludes, all unconsciously justifying his Catholic critics, "no heretic would ever be condemned nor would there be a heretic on all the earth; for it is the nature of heretics to tamper first with one article only and then bit by bit to deny them all. . . . If the bell have but a single crack, it no longer rings true and is quite useless."[1]

It was on the strength of this principle of the absolutely binding character of all the truths of religion (at least of those which he himself retained) that he ventured to depict Zwingli as the biggest rebel against the faith.

"Zwingel, who was miserably slain on the battlefield, and Œcolampadius who died of grief on that account, perished in their sins because they obstinately persisted in their errors."[2] He could not "but despair of Zwingel's salvation," for the latter was an arch-heretic.

So harsh a judgment on Zwingli is, however, quite unjustifiable if we start from the more liberal conception of faith which Luther had once advocated together with the stricter view, and which indeed he never in so many words retracted. On such grounds Kawerau may well take Zwingli under his wing against Luther.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 414 f. Kurtz Bekenntnis. A similar passage occurs in "Comm. in Gal.," ed. Irmischer, 2, pp. 334, *seq.*, 336.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 399.

His words will be quoted a little further on. Meanwhile, however, it must be pointed out that Luther's unkindly criticism of Zwingli is not to be explained merely by the above view of faith. In his Life of Luther Adolf Hausrath throws some light on its psychological side. "Language so insulting as Luther's," he says, "no bishop had ever used against Zwingli,"[1] and he lays his hand boldly on the weak spot with the object of bringing out Luther's astounding want of logic. He had proclaimed the right of examining Scripture freely and without being tied down by the teaching of the Church, yet he refused to allow Zwingli such freedom; the latter "had applied the principle indiscriminately to everything (?) handed down by the Church, whereas Luther wished to put aside merely what was contrary to his convictions on justification by faith alone, or to the plain sense of Scripture."[2] Luther "fancied he could guess who had inspired the Sacramentarians with their blasphemies. Thereby he envenomed the controversy from the very outset. For him there could be no truce with the devil."[3] "In any sign of life given by the Swiss he at once sniffed the 'devil's breeches.'"[4] Luther himself admits that "to begin with, it was Zwingli's wrong doctrine and the fact 'that the Swiss wished to be first,'"[5] which had led to the estrangement. The "wrong doctrine" he detected, thanks to that gift of infallibility which led the Sacramentarians to call his behaviour "papistic." We have here, according to Hausrath, a "religious genius, who, by the force of his personality and word, sought to make all others bow to the law of his mind." "We must resign ourselves to the fact that this great man had the shortcomings which belong to his virtues. Disputatiousness and love to pick a quarrel, faults which simply represented the other side of his firm faith, and which some had already deplored in the young monk at Erfurt, Wittenberg and Leipzig, had naturally not been abated by his many victorious combats, and, now, more than ever, Oldecop's words were true: 'He wanted to be in the right in all the disputations and was fond of quarrelling.' The fact is that Luther was no exception to the rule, that man finds nothing harder to bear well than success."[6]

Nevertheless, to return to the question of faith, Luther had already laid down in his writings certain marks by which it might be ascertained whether a man is a believer or not, and which at any rate scarcely tally with the criteria he applies to Zwingli. Judged by these Zwingli would emerge quite blameless.

Kawerau points this out in defence of Zwingli: "The idea of faith," he says, "which Luther had newly evolved, in opposition to the Catholic assent to the teaching of the Bible and the Church, led logically to determining from a man's attitude towards Christ

[1] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 189.

[2] "Formerly it had not been the way with Martinus Eleutherius to make eternal salvation depend on agreement with a single dogma, and even in the Preface to Romans he had meant by justifying faith something very different."

[3] *Ib.*, p. 189. [4] P. 222. [5] P. 197. [6] P. 189.

and His saving Grace whether he was a true believer or not; Luther himself frequently made this his criterion; for instance, in answer to the question: Who is a member of the Church, and whom must I regard as my dear brother in Christ? He replies, all those 'Who confess Christ as sent by God the Father in order to reconcile us to Him by His death and to obtain for us grace'; or again: All 'those who put their trust in Christ alone and confess Him in faith,' or yet again: 'All those who seek the Lord with their whole heart and soul . . . and who trust in nothing but in God's mercy.'" [1] But had not Zwingli loudly proclaimed himself to be one of these?

"In such utterances of Luther's we find," according to Kawerau, "summed up the purely religious and Evangelical conception of faith." Here there is no question of any accepting of the several articles of faith, of any submission to a "string of doctrinal propositions," of any "faith made up of so and so many 'articles' all of such importance that to reject one involves the dropping of the others." [2] According to this theologian Luther was untrue to his own basic theories when he assailed Zwingli as he did. Kawerau also agrees with Hausrath in holding that the principal cause of Luther's estrangement was a psychological one which indeed constituted the weakest spot in his whole position, viz. his identification of his own theological outbuilding of an article of faith, with its religious content,[3] or, to speak more plainly, his setting himself up as the sole authority after having set aside that of the Church.

(*b*) *The Melting away of Luther's Dogmas viewed in the Light of Protestant Criticism*

We have already put on record those doctrines of the olden Church, which, inclusive of the idea of faith itself, Luther threw overboard; we now come to the doctrines which he retained, which deserve to be considered in connection with the strictures of modern Protestant theologians, particularly of Harnack. At least these strictures bring out very clearly their contradictory and illogical character. Evidently Harnack is not altogether wrong when he uses as a page-heading the words "Exit dogma in Protestantism,[4] and elsewhere:[5] "Embarrassments and problems in Luther's heritage."

Luther, to quote Harnack, "frequently hardened his heart against certain consequences of his own religious principles."[6] But "if 'the whole Luther' is to be set up

[1] "Luthers Stellung" (see p. 445, n. 4), p. 28. [2] *Ib.*, p. 27 f.
[3] P. 28. [4] From p. 808. [5] From p. 871.
[6] "DG.," 3[4], p. 864, n.

as the law of faith for the Evangelical Church, then, where it is a question of matters of history, such consequences cannot be simply ignored." "The Lutheran Reformation," writes Fr. Loofs, "would have ended otherwise as regards the history of dogma, had Luther braved tradition and followed up his theories to their logical conclusion. The shreds of the old which remained hampered the growth of the new ideas, even in Luther's own case."[1]

Original Sin and Unfreedom; Law and Gospel; Penance

Luther took over from the olden Church the doctrine of the existence of original sin, but he so changed it, particularly by affirming that it resulted in the destruction of free-will, that the doctrine itself becomes untenable.

Of this all-important groundwork of his anthropology the theologian Taube says: "It is not surprising that Luther fails to remain faithful to the attitude he has assumed. It is as impossible to him, as to any other thinking mind, to fail to find freedom presupposed in every corner, in his personal Christianity, and in his own work as pastor, preacher or reformer. Facts are stronger than theories and *a priori* reasonings. . . . Either the *data* of experience must be held to be mere illusion, or absolute determinism must be thrown over. We cannot answer the same question both in the negative and in the affirmative and then declare it to be a mystery; it would be no mystery but simply a contradiction."[2]

Still, Luther found it easier than Taube thinks to proclaim things to be mysteries which palpably were nothing but contradictions. A glance at Köstlin's "Luthers Theologie" shows how often Luther attempts to distract the reader from the difficulties he himself enumerates with the consoling words: This we must not seek to pry into.—Taube too is optimistic with regard to the fate of the doctrine of unfreedom in modern Protestant theology; appealing to the above contradictions, he writes: "It is not surprising that the Lutheran theology, closely as it keeps to Luther's views in many other matters, has never ventured to follow him on this all-important point, and, in fact, has departed ever further from him.[3] The truth is that the period of withdrawal inaugurated by Melanchthon in 1527 has been succeeded in our own day by one of closer approximation. (Cp. above, vol. ii., p. 292, n. 4.)

[1] "Leitfaden der DG.,"[4], p. 740 f. Quoted by Harnack, p. 864.
[2] "Luthers Lehre über Freiheit," etc. (p. 443, n. 1), p. 47.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 48.

Apart from the theory of man's absolute depravity and lack of free-will there are other things which are damaging to Luther's doctrine of original sin, particularly his opinion that original sin persists after baptism.

"The doctrine of original sin as taught by the olden Church," says Harnack, "was amended by Luther and made to agree with his own principles," but it was against his principles "to make of such things articles of faith. His own sense of sin and the need he felt of pacifying his conscience occupied in it so large a place that he transformed what was in reality a piece of Christian self-judgment into an historical fact of universal appliance concerning the beginnings of the human race." At any rate Luther's exaggeration of the impotence of fallen man served "as a ground of excuse for our own guilt."[1]

As regards his doctrine of the Law and the Gospel; Luther hoped, by contrasting it with the Gospel, to bring the Law into prominence. By the Law he understood the sum-total of what was commanded not merely in the Old but also in the New Testament; the teaching of the Gospel, on the other hand, contained only consoling thoughts on the fulfilment of the Law by Christ and the appropriation of Christ's merits by faith.[2]

"Plain as it is," says Harnack, "what Luther really desired by his distinction between the Law and the Gospel, still, coming to details, we find that the Reformer's statements do not always agree. Thus it is partly left to our own private judgment to select those utterances which we consider more important; Luther himself nevertheless gives the preference to certain ideas which *in perpetuum* invest the Law with a peculiar independent significance. Is it not, however, our duty to depict the Reformer in accordance with his most original ideas?"[3]

Such an "original" idea is that of the abrogation of the Law for the Christian who is really redeemed and who voluntarily and without compulsion leaves faith to express itself in action. "Certainty of the abrogation of the Law constitutes a certain demand which can be met only in one way." Luther carries the paradox so far as to say: The Law is given to be broken. And yet . . . Luther ever cherishes the "assumption that the Law is the expression of God's immutable will, and, in this sense, has its own enduring sphere of action side by side with the Gospel, as though the Will of God were not implicitly contained in the latter. But this admission involved a place being found for the Law even in Christianity." Of this difficulty Luther was perfectly conscious, but he was deft enough in circumventing it. "The Law *qua lex* is undoubtedly abrogated for the Christian; whoever

[1] "DG.," 3^4, p. 877 f.
[2] See above, p. 7 ff.
[3] P. 843 n.

tries to act up to the Law must needs go to hell; but in God's sight it still holds good, i.e. God's Will remains expressed therein and He must watch over its fulfilment." If the law is not fulfilled God must demand penance.[1]

In the question of penance we again see Luther assume an attitude which is, as a matter of fact, subversive of his own doctrine. His ideas on this point are so contradictory that Protestant writers on dogma have not been able to agree in their accounts, and needless to say, still less in their judgments.

Alfred Galley, one of the most recent writers on "Luther's doctrine of penance," admits: "The various attempts made to solve the matter have so far yielded no satisfactory result." [2] And yet for ten years Lipsius, Herrmann and others had been carefully exploring this central point of Luther's practical theology. Galley's own efforts, kindly disposed as he is to Luther, and in spite of his mastery of the texts, have not as yet rallied other theologians to his opinion.

Luther's original doctrine of Penance, to which frequent allusion has already been made, started, according to Loofs, (1906) with the assumption that contrition is produced solely by the "love of righteousness," and that true penance "does not come from the Law," because the latter does nothing but "kill, curse, render guilty and pronounce judgment"; penance produced by the Law led only to hypocrisy. "Thus, before one has faith, to think of sin and of the Law is harmful." Luther, however, gradually acquiesced in the modifications introduced by Melanchthon in favour of the Law and of that sorrow which arises from the thought of the penalties. That "Luther to a certain extent adopted Melanchthon's ideas on penance is still more apparent in the Antinomian controversy [1537–1540]," yet the ideas of his opponent, Agricola, bore some "resemblance" to "Luther's earlier ideas" on Christian penance.[3]

As for Harnack, he emphasises the confusion which arose in the Lutheran theology owing to Luther's illogical attitude towards so eminently practical a question as the doctrine of penance; even during Luther's lifetime the doctrine of penance had been a real "labyrinth." "Here too," says Harnack, "Luther himself took the lead, and then quietly winked at what was contrary to his own early principles, which, moreover, he had never retracted. That the mediaeval Catholic view had its after effect on him ought not to be denied." "He was convinced that faith works penance, the 'dying daily,' which indeed is but the negative side of faith," and that "only such penance as comes from faith [from the Gospel] is of value in God's sight. . . . This is certainly a view which may easily grow into its dreadful op-

[1] P. 884. [2] Above, p. 443, n. 2, p. 6.
[3] "Leitfaden der DG.," [4], p. 719 ff.

posite, viz. the comfortable presuming on salvation. . . . If people are told that they must always be performing penance, and that particular acts of penance are of no avail, few will ever have recourse to penance at all."[1]

Hence, according to Harnack, Luther made a change in the doctrine of penance and more importance was given to the Law; "for each separate act of sin on the part of the baptised" satisfaction must be made, and "Christ must intervene anew with His fulfilment of the Law."[2] By this means, by the creative action of God, "faith" is constantly revived in the man who has fallen, and God, as Luther now assumes, works by means of the Law. In this wise, faith, however, becomes, says Harnack, "a meritorious work," seeing that it is the seal of our reconciliation; moreover "personal responsibility and personal action must play some part."[3] But how is man to do this, devoid as he is of any freedom of the will?

Again, for all his alteration of his doctrine of penance Luther failed to "attain the object he was after, viz. to check laxity and frivolity. On the contrary, the new doctrine tended, in its later developments, to promote and foster them."[4] Nor was much gained, when, in order to promote penance and greater earnestness of life the Law was "placed before the Gospel. This Melanchthon did with Luther's consent in the 'Instructions for the Visitors.'[5] Occasion was taken at the same time to insist strongly on the use of the confessional in order to check at least the worst sins." "The intervention of the clergyman, which was undoubtedly needed by the 'common people,'" constituted merely "a Lutheran counterpart of the Catholic sacrament of penance," though, adds Harnack, "minus its burdensome Romish additions."[6]

Luther's Doctrine of Justification and Good Works, as seen by Protestant Critics

According to Harnack, "the idea of justification," the central point of Luther's teaching, "shrinks into a merely outward act of God's designed to quieten consciences. Here again the superiority of the Catholic doctrine could not fail to appear; for to be content with the '*fides sola*' could not but involve a very questionable laxity. It would, from this point of view, have been far better to have represented the

[1] "DG.," 3[4], p. 883 f. [2] *Ib.*, p. 884 f.

[3] P. 887. Harnack here quotes a passage to the point from "Corp. ref.," 26, p. 51 *seq.*, where the "Instruction" seeks to pacify those who fancied that, by the above statement, "our previous teaching was being repudiated." Melanchthon says that, "the rude, common man" must learn to accept "commandment, law, fear," etc., as "articles of faith" which precede penance.

[4] "DG.," 3[4], p. 884. [5] Above vol. iii., p. 323 ff.

[6] P. 885 f.

'*fides caritate formata*' as alone of any value in God's sight."[1] In his doctrine of justification by faith alone, Luther never got over the weak point, viz. his exclusion of charity, at least a commencement of which, together with faith, hope and repentance, had been required by the olden Church as a preparation for justification. Some return to the Catholic requirements was called for. "Hence it is not in the least surprising, . . . that Melanchthon at a later date abandoned the '*sola fides*' and came to advocate a modified form of synergism. The Luther-zealots were thrown into hopeless confusion by the necessity in which they found themselves, of harmonizing the older Evangelical theory with the doctrine of penance whilst avoiding the pitfall of Melanchthon's synergism." They found themselves, so Harnack says, face to face with two "*iustificationes*," that by faith alone, and that by law and penance, not to speak of a third, the "*iustificatio*" of infants by the act of baptism. "These contradictions become still further accentuated when the "*regeneratio*" was taken into account," etc.[2] It is not worth while to pursue any further Harnack's criticism which at times tends to become carping.

As regards the doctrine of good works, Protestant theology of late has been disposed to take offence at Luther's undue extension of freedom, which seems to endanger good works and the zealous keeping of the Law.

It is the Christian's art, so Loofs sums up Luther's teaching, to allow no thought of the Law to trouble his conscience, but simply to regard Christ as the bearer of his sins. "Here the one-sided view of the 'Law,' seen only from the standpoint of the need of acquiring merit by works, has a disturbing effect"; such is Loofs's opinion. According to Luther such contempt for the Law is often impossible, hence he determined to conquer the "dualism of the old-new man" of which we like St. Paul (Gal. ii. 20) are conscious: I live, and yet I do not; I am dead, and yet I am not; a sinner, and yet no sinner; I have the Law and yet I have it not. We ought, according to Luther, to say to ourselves: There is a time to die and a time to live, a Law to be obeyed and a Law to be despised. "Even during the Antinomian controversy," concludes Loofs, "Luther did not abandon such thoughts."[3]

Luther's want of discrimination is most apparent, he says, in the fact, that, owing to his "peculiar interest in the preaching of

[1] P. 886.
[2] "DG.," 3[4], p. 886.
[3] "Leitfaden der DG.,"[4], p. 775 ff.

the grace of God," he depreciated works and the Law as the very fount of self-righteousness.[1]

Loofs rightly refers to a sermon in the Church-postils where Luther inveighs against the "Papists, Anabaptists and other sects" who scream against us: "What is the use of your preaching so much of faith and Christ? What good does it do the people?"[2] Luther could not in fact "sufficiently decry the Law or urge too strongly that it was useless to Christians."[3]

In the passage quoted Luther says of the exhortations to works and the preaching of the Commandments: "This preaching does nothing else but kill, i.e. far from being good or useful it is only harmful . . . rank poison and death."

And he goes on: "All our works, however precious they may be, are nothing but poison and death. . . . People may indeed boast loudly and say: 'If you live in this way, take pains to keep the Law and perform many good works, you will be saved.' But that these are only vain words, nay, a harmful doctrine, will soon be apparent."[4] It is not in man's power to keep the Commandments by the performance of the right and necessary works, hence he becomes troubled and at last despairs if he strives after works. "The human race is so depraved that no one can be found who does not transgress all God's commandments even though the wrath of God and his eternal damnation be held up before him and preached to him daily; indeed if this is impressed upon a man over much he only begins to rage against it more horribly."[5] It is merely "reason with its human ideas" which "cannot get beyond this, viz. that God is gracious to all who live in this manner and do what the Ten Commandments require; for reason knows nothing of the misery of our depraved nature, nor does it know that no one is able to keep God's command." For this cause Luther had at last brought to light and taught "that other doctrine in which grace and reconciliation are proclaimed" to us according to the "spirit and letter" of St. Paul, whereas even the old doctors, Origen, Jerome and others, had not grasped St. Paul's meaning."[6]

In Popery "Scripture and St. Paul's Epistles" were pushed under the bench, and, instead, we wallowed in human foolishness like the swine in their sties."[7]

"Of what use is it to us that Moses and the Law say: This shalt thou do, this would God have of thee? Yes, good Moses, I know this well and it is indeed quite true. But do you tell me how it is that, unfortunately, I neither keep it nor am able to keep it? It is no easy thing to spend money with an empty purse or to drink out of an empty can; if I am to pay my debts

[1] Cp. Mausbach, "Die kath. Moral," pp. 214 ff., 226 ff.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 237 ff.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 774. Cp. pp. 702, 706, 721, 769.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 239. Cp. *ib.*, 63, p. 112, where Luther points out that the Gospel condemns works in so far as they are intended to make us pious and to save us.
[5] P. 233. [6] P. 228. [7] P. 237.

and to quench my thirst, then please tell me how I may come by a full purse and a brimming can. To this the babblers have no answer," etc.[1]

And yet the Catholic writers whom he dubs babblers, Erasmus and Eck for instance, had demonstrated from Scripture and tradition that first, man is by no means so helpless and depraved as Luther assumes, and, secondly, that the grace of God is at his disposal every moment in order, by supernatural assistance, to enable his natural powers to keep the Law. While pointing this out they appeal at the same time to those passages of Scripture which spur us on to good works, and even make our heavenly reward dependent on them.

Of these latter passages Loofs also asks: "In reality are not those alone saved who, besides their faith, can point to good works or at least to their fulfilment of the first Commandment? Does not Scripture over and over again speak of our being judged according to our works, and of the eternal *reward?*" Luther, however, so he remarks, got over the difficulty "by assuming, that, in such passages, faith is meant even when they speak of good works"; Luther actually finds a parallel in the "rule of the '*communicatio idiomatum*'" which deals with the Divine attributes of Christ made man.[2]

Another attempt to evade the difficulty, so Loofs declares, is found in Luther's statement regarding the reward promised in the Bible to the just for their works. He argued that there must be some difference between the saved in their "degree of brightness and glory," and thus, "*accidentaliter*," he makes some account of the reward.[3] Loofs, however, also draws attention to the fact that in the same sermons on Matthew, when touching cursorily on this, Luther "pokes fun at the idea of God setting some 'particular Saint' in a topmost place in heaven, and inveighs against the traditional idea of the '*præmium accidentale.*'"[4] This is quite true, for Luther's statements do not agree even here. In the passage quoted he is explaining his doctrine according to which, in this world, all the justified are equal in sanctity, the sinner who has just been converted being as pleasing to God as the Apostles. "For were St. Peter a better Christian than I am, he would have to have a better Christ, a better Gospel and a better baptism. But, seeing that the heritage we enjoy is one and the same, we must all be equal in this."[5]

There are few sayings of Luther's where the wholly mechanical nature of the forgiveness and sanctification taught by him, stands out more clearly.

[1] *Ib.*

[2] "Leitfaden der DG.," [4], p. 769 f. Cp. "Comm. in Gal." "Werke," Weim. ed., 40, 1, p. 415 f. Irmischer, 1, p. 382 *seq.*

[3] Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 43, p. 367 f.: "Whoever works more and suffers more will also have a more glorious reward." *Ib.*, 58, p. 354 f.: "Opera . . . accidentaliter glorificabunt personam."

[4] *Ib.*, p. 771, with a reference to "Werke," Erl. ed., 43, pp. 361, 366.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 259.

That, in spite of all this, he does not exclude works, is sufficiently remarkable. In the very passage where Luther brings forward the objection of the Papists and Anabaptists : It must be *done*, i.e. good works, must be performed, he hastens to reply : " We have the Ten Commandments which we teach and keep as well as they " ;[1] the only difference was, that, he by his Evangelical preaching taught how the Commandments were really to be honoured.

Loofs can even say that Luther proclaims the need of good works. He quotes the following utterances, for instance, from Luther's later years : "*Opera habent suam necessitatem*" ; " they, too, must be there " ; " On account of the hypocrites we must say that good works are requisite for salvation ('*necessaria ad salutem*'),"[2] " he did not shrink from speaking in this way when giving counsel."[3] It is quite true, that, when preaching to the people, mindful of their faults and vices, he is fond, as Loofs shows, of recalling how Christ says " drily and clearly " : " If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments [Mt. xix. 17]; item, Do this and thou shalt live, etc. [Luke x. 28]. This must be taken as it stands and without debate."[4] Hence Luther even calls those folk " mad " who say : " ' Only believe and you will be saved.' No, good fellow, that will not do, and you will never get to the kingdom of heaven unless you keep the Commandments. . . . For it is written plainly enough : ' If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' "[5] And Luther supports this text by others which speak of works, of their merit and demerit, their reward and punishment.[6]

And yet immediately after he goes on to complain : " How are we to do what the Law perpetually urges and requires, seeing that we are unable to comply with its demands ? "[7]

Finally he reaches his usual answer : " I will do it, says Christ, and fulfil it " ; first of all He again and again obtains forgiveness for us, " seeing that we are unable to keep the Law " ; Christ, however, did not wish us " to continue sinning " ; on the contrary, the grace He infuses makes us keep the Law " willingly and gladly " ; good works, more particularly those of charity towards our neighbour, spring up of themselves after " we have crept beneath Christ's mantle and wing."[8] Where faith is present " it cannot but work unceasingly what is good. It does not ask whether there be a call to do good works, but even before the question is put it has already done them, and is ever after doing

[1] *Ib.*, p. 237.

[2] And yet Luther, on June 1, 1537, boldly denounced the Thesis "*Bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem.*" " Disputationen," ed. Drews, *ib.*, p. 159. Loofs, *ib.*, pp. 770, 857.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 770.

[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 178 ff.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 179.

[6] He also defends the Law in the same way against the Antinomians, speaking very much in Melanchthon's style. Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 861.

[7] " Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 181.

[8] *Ib.*, p. 183. Cp. above, p. 26 f.

them."[1] Those Christians—presumably the majority—who fail to find themselves in such a state receive but poor consolation: "Whoever does not perform such works is an unbelieving man, who gropes and looks about for faith and good works but knows neither the one nor the other."[2]

Luther did not see that he was endangering both faith and works and undermining their very foundations.

For, as his opponents objected, the last category of Christians, however careless they might be in the matter of good works, and however much they might fail to keep the Commandments, could, nevertheless, for the most part, at least boast of having the faith, whether regarded in the light of a "loving confidence in God's grace" or in the more usual and ordinary sense of an acceptance of the divine revelation as true. Their faith, it was urged, was according to Luther at the outset very closely in touch with sin, indeed they had been justified by faith without either repentance or change of heart, faith having merely spread a cloak over their evil deeds; and yet now here was Luther telling them that they had lost the faith unless they lived by it, or if they transgressed the Commandments even by a venial sin—for Luther sees no distinction between mortal sin and venial.

Loofs is certainly not overstating things when he says that, "Luther was not clear in his own mind"[3] as to his doctrine on the great questions of works and the Law, and that his "opinion comprised much that did not tally."[4]

Loofs adds: "How far Luther himself was aware that much of what he said voiced merely his own personal opinion it would be hard to tell. . . . Without his wealth of ideas and his ability to insist now on one, now on another side of a subject Luther would not have been so successful as a reformer. But he was hampered by his own qualities so soon as it became a question of putting his new views in didactic form."[5]

Loofs, like Harnack, spares no praise when speaking of Luther's "qualities" and the "happy intuition" which enabled him to overthrow the olden order and to call into being a new, "religious," Christianity.

[1] Cp. *ib.*, 63, pp. 113 ff., 125, 134. Preface to the translation of Romans.

[2] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 566, on this Preface. See also above, pp. 39 f., 47 ff.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 771. [4] *Ib.*, p. 778. [5] P. 781 f.

Luther's Doctrine of Merit in the Eyes of Protestant Critics

One such "happy intuition" Loofs sees in the fact, that, in the question of works and merit Luther "clearly perceived and got the better of the opinion, untenable in religion, that a scale of merit exists as between God and man."[1] The critic abstains from discussing the Catholic teaching on supernatural merit. Its earlier no less than its later defenders rightly emphasised, in opposition to Luther, that the olden doctrine of merit rested on the express promise of God to reward faithful service, and not, as Luther insinuated, on any absolute right of the works in themselves to such reward. The act which was to meet with such a reward must, they said, be not only good in itself but also supernaturally good, i.e. it must be performed by man's powers aided by supernatural grace; even this, however, would not suffice were there not the gracious promise on God's part, guaranteed by revelation, that such an act would be requited by a heavenly reward. Yet this was not to deny a certain "*condignitas in actu primo*" inherent in the act itself.

Luther, it is true, laughs to scorn the Popish doctrine of merit which makes God Himself our debtor. Yet long before St. Augustine had answered the objection: "God has become our debtor, not as though He has received something from us, but because He has promised what pleased Him. It is a different thing when we say to a man: You are my debtor because I have given you something, and when we say to God: Give us what Thou hast promised, for we have done what Thou didst command."[2]

In the fragments of the ancient doctrine of religious morality which Luther saw fit to retain he put germs of disintegration owing to his failure to recognise the above truth. Because he would hear nothing of merit and everywhere scented righteousness-by-works, he built up a theory of good works which lacks a foundation. In the last resort everything is coloured by his dread of self-righteousness and of any human co-operation. "The 'Law,' to Luther, seemed conditioned by that '*condicio meriti*,'" says Loofs, "which belonged to the Law of Moses, and, which, owing

[1] P. 771. [2] Sermo 158, c. 2.

to the craving of the natural man for self-righteousness, also becomes part of the natural law."[1]

So strongly does Luther denounce merit and self-righteousness that he practically does away with his own doctrine of works.

First, his denial of free-will and the absolute determinism of his doctrine makes an end of all spontaneous, meritorious action on man's part. Further, he is untrue to his position, repudiating it in his sermons and popular writings as far as possible, and replacing it by one morally more defensible. In later years we find him casting over his own teaching even in his theological disputations; in his anxiety to counter the Antinomians, he goes so far as to declare works necessary for salvation.

Even earlier the fanatics and Anabaptists had helped to some extent in the work of demolition. Their conclusions as to the dangers of Luther's system and their protests against its evil moral consequences are really much more vigorous and damaging than might appear from Luther's bitter rejoinders. "The unjust attitude of the reformers towards the 'fanatics,'" says Harnack, "was disastrous to themselves and their cause. How much might they not have learnt from these despised people even though obliged to repudiate their principles."[2]

The work of demolition was, moreover, being carried out under Luther's very eye by Philip Melanchthon and his friends. Luther's doctrine, as has already been pointed out, was not at all to the taste of the dialectician of Lutheranism. "The Philippists," says Loofs, "were very far from holding Luther's own views," "as far removed as" the Antinomians. Luther himself, however, "was partly to blame for the confusion." From the standpoint adopted by Melanchthon "it was impossible to comply" with Luther's demand for a clear "distinction to be made between Law and Gospel";[3] yet, according to Luther, this was one of "the things on which theology hinges."[4] According to Loofs, Melanchthon's theology was a means of spoiling some "valuable reformation truths," nay, "the most priceless of Luther's new ideas."[5] As for Melanchthon's allegation, viz. that he had

[1] "Leitfaden," [4], p. 773 f. [2] "DG.," 3[4], p. 870.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 900. [4] P. 770.
[5] P. 856 f. Cp. G. Kruger's opinion, vol. iii., p. 352, n. 2.

merely put Luther's doctrine more mildly, Loofs says bluntly: "If he meant this, then he deceived himself."[1] As to the points under discussion, Luther not only thought differently from Melanchthon at an earlier date, but persisted in so doing till his very death. Luther, nevertheless, never expressed any disapproval of Melanchthon's ideas, widely as they differed from his own.

Luther's teaching on the Sacraments and on the Supper according to Protestant Teaching

In Harnack's opinion Luther, by his teaching on the one sacrament, viz. the Word, "destroyed the olden ecclesiastical view. Yet he unconsciously retained a certain remnant . . . which had fatal results on the development of his doctrine. Though here again we find truth and error side by side in Luther, we may not shut our eyes to the fact that he opened the door to errors of a grave character."[2]

The principal error in his doctrine of the sacraments consisted, according to Harnack, in his having made his own a reminiscence of the Catholic view. Instead of teaching that the Holy Ghost acts by the Word alone, he came, as his statements subsequent to 1525 show, to regard this Spirit as operating by the "Word *and* the Sacraments."[3]

"In his teaching on the sacraments he forsook the attitude he had once adopted as a reformer and accepted views which tended to confuse his own doctrine of faith and still more the theology of his followers. In his efforts to thwart the fanatics he came to embrace . . . some highly questionable propositions. . . . This relapse in his views on the means of grace wrought untold damage to Lutheranism."[4] Here his desire to get the better of the fanatics played a part, and so did likewise the psychological starting-point of his whole teaching. He reverted to the means of grace, "because he wished to provide real consolation for troubled consciences, and to preserve them from the hell of uncertainty concerning that state of grace of which the fanatics appeared to make so small account. . . . It was, however, not merely by his rejection of certain definite acts as

[1] P. 857. [2] P. 868.

[3] Harnack (p. 880) refers to Müller, *ib.*, p. 321 f., i.e. to Luther's Schmalkalden Articles of 1537, where we read ("Symbol. Bücher," par. 3, Art. 8, ed. Müller-Kolde[10]: "*Ita præmuniamus nos adversum enthusiastas . . . quod Deus non velit nobiscum aliter agere nisi per vocale verbum et sacramenta.*" But similar passages occur in the book Harnack also quotes, "Widder die hymelischen Propheten" (1525), "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 62 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 134 ff., particularly 136 ff. = 208 ff.

[4] "DG.," 3[4], p. 879 f.

means of grace that Luther returned to the narrow views of the Middle Ages which he had previously forsaken—the spirit lives not (as Luther knew better than any other man), thanks to any means of grace, but thanks rather to that close union with its God on Whom it lays hold through Christ—he did so still more by seeking, first, to vindicate Infant Baptism as a means of grace in the strict sense; secondly, by accepting Penance as at least a preparation for grace, and, thirdly, by maintaining that the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Supper constitutes the essential part of this sacrament."[1] It is true he "never ceased to maintain that the means of grace were nothing but the Word whereby faith is awakened," but, in spite of this, the "*opus operatum*" of the olden Church "had again made its appearance and weakened or obscured the strict relations between Gospel and faith."[2]

Of Infant Baptism in Luther's system Harnack rightly says: "If Luther's Evangelical theory holds good, viz. that grace and faith are inseparably linked,[3] then Infant Baptism is in itself no sacrament, and can be no more than an ecclesiastical rite; if it *is* a sacrament in the strict sense, then evidently his theory is at fault. We cannot escape the dilemma, either by appealing to the faith of the parents or god-parents [as Luther, to begin with, did] —for this is the worst kind of the '*fides implicita*'—or by assuming that faith is given in baptism,[4] for an unconscious faith is almost as bad as that other '*fides implicita*.' Hence the proper thing for Luther to have done would have been either to abolish Infant Baptism . . . or to admit that it was a mere rite to be completed later. . . . Luther, however, did neither; on the contrary, he retained Infant Baptism as the sacrament of regeneration and accepted as an efficacious act what should, given his theory, have at most been a symbol of God's preventing grace. This was, however much he might deny it, to hark back to the '*opus operatum*' and to dissolve the link between faith and the working of grace."[5]

Again, according to Harnack, the mould in which Luther cast his doctrine of the Supper once more involved him in contradictions which rendered his position untenable.

On the one hand, by so strenuously insisting on the belief in the Real Presence as a binding doctrinal formula he was untrue to his own theory that doctrine was not to be formulated; on the other hand, his restatement of the doctrine of the Supper emptied it of all content. It was "in part the fault of his

[1] *Ib.*, p. 881. [2] P. 881 f.

[3] "Where faith is not present [baptism] remains nothing but a barren sign." "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 221; Erl. ed., 21, p. 140. Larger Catechism, Part IV: on Baptism.

[4] "We bring the child for this [Baptism], thinking and hoping that it believes, and praying God to give it the faith."

[5] *Ib.*, p. 882. Cp. above, vol. iv., p. 487 ff., the works of the Protestant theologians: J. Gottschick, O. Scheel, E. Rietschel, E. Haupt, W. Herrmann and E. Bunge, on how Baptism suffered in Luther's system.

formulating of the faith that the later Lutheran Church, with its Christology, its teaching on the Sacrament . . . and the false standard by which it judged divergent doctrines and pronounced them heretical, threatened for a while to become a sort of caricature of the Catholic Church."[1]

Harnack notes how Luther, the better to reach the real meaning of the words "This is My Body," actually called tradition to his aid, in his case an extremely illogical thing to do. His consciousness that in holding fast to the Real Presence he was backed by the whole Church of yore lends his words unusual power. "Even were a hundred thousand devils and all the fanatics to fall upon it, still the doctrine must stand firm."[2] We may add, that, with regard to this sacrament, Luther outdid his adversaries in his attachment to tradition and antiquity, reintroducing communion under both kinds as being alone in strict accord with Scripture.

There was also much that was personal and arbitrary in the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar as shaped anew and established by Luther. For one thing, he dwelt far too exclusively on this sacrament being the pledge of the forgiveness of sins. Again, in his desire to counter Zwingli, he put forward theories on the sacrament, which embody all sorts of disadvantages and contradictions not to be found in the teaching of the earlier Church. He, indeed, denied Transubstantiation, but the "Swiss could not for the life of them see why he did, since he admits that a stupendous miracle takes place in the Supper."[3]

For the Church's ancient doctrine of Transubstantiation he substituted Impanation, and even this he admitted only in the actual celebration and reception.[4] "The awkward part was," says Harnack, "that, according to Luther, the Body and Blood of Christ were present in the Supper only for the purpose of reception, though they might be partaken of even by an unbeliever or a heathen.[5] The concomitance (presence of both Body and Blood under either kind) taught by the olden Church, which, indeed, was a natural corollary of the Real Presence, he set aside, urged thereto by his theory that in Communion both kinds must be received; the only result was to introduce a new and uncalled-for miracle. To this must be added what Harnack calls the "crazy speculations on the ubiquity of the Body of Christ,"[6] which furnished Melanchthon his principal reason for

[1] *Ib.*, p. 894.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 224; Erl. ed., 21, p. 143.

[3] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 223. Cp. on Zwingli, vol. iii., p. 379 ff., and below, p. 465, n. 1.

[4] Of the doctrine of Impanation, Loofs ("Leitfaden," p. 905) says, that the famous formulary on the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ: *sub pane, in pane, cum pane,* cannot be traced to Luther, but was only gathered after his day from the Larger and Smaller Catechism (Weim. ed., 30, 1, pp. 223, 315; Erl. ed., 21, p. 143, 19).

[5] "Dogmengesch.," 3[4], p. 894,

[6] *Ib.*, p. 875. Loofs speaks (p. 920) of the "christological enormities inseparable from Luther's doctrine of the sacrament."

giving up Luther's doctrine of the Supper, and, like Zwingli and Bucer, denying the Real Presence. According to Luther, the ubiquity of the Body of Christ rested on the supposed "real communication of the Divine '*idiomata*' (and consequently of the Divine omnipresence) to the humanity of Christ."[1]

Nor does the Real Presence, according to Luther, begin at the consecration; as to when it does, he leaves the faithful in the dark; nor does he enlighten them as to when it ceases in the remains left over after communion; in the latter regard his practice was full of contradictions.—In allowing communion to be carried to the sick in their own houses he was again unfaithful to his tenets.[2] To any processions of the sacrament he was averse, because Christ was only present at the time of reception.

He proposed, as the better plan, that the sacrament should not be adored save by bending the knee when receiving it, and yet his own behaviour did not tally with his proposal.[3] It was enacted at Wittenberg, in 1542, that there should be no elevation, and yet Luther had retained this rite at an earlier date, in order to defy Carlstadt, as he says, and so as not to seem in this "indifferent matter" to sanction by his attitude Carlstadt's attack on the sacrament.[4] He was, to say the least, verbally illogical when he termed the Eucharist the "*sacrificium eucharisticum*," meaning of course thereby that it was a "thank-offering" on the part of the faithful.

[1] Cp. Loofs, *ib.*, p. 811.

[2] Cp. Luther's letter to Anton Lauterbach, Nov. 26, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 295, where he expresses himself opposed to such private communions, though tolerating them for the time being. Communion in the church three or four times a year would suffice in order to be able to die "fortified by the Word." In a time of public sickness, such as the plague, the communion of the sick would become an insupportable burden, and further the Church must not be enslaved ("*facere servilem*") to the sacraments, particularly in the case of those who had previously despised them.

[3] In the work "Von Anbeten des Sacramēts" (1523) Luther says that each one should be left free to adore or not, and that those who do not adore the sacrament are not to be termed heretics, for it is not commanded, Christ not being there in His glory as He is in heaven." Those do best who forget "their duty towards the sacrament" and therefore do not adore, because there is "danger" in adoration. "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 448 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 410 f.—Still, in 1544, writing to the Princes Johann, George and Joachim of Anhalt, he says: "*Cum Christus vere adest in pane, cur non ibi summa reverentia tractaretur et adoraretur etiam?*" Prince Joachim declared that he "had seen Luther kneel down and reverently adore the sacrament at the elevation." Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 341 (Notes by Besold, 1544).

[4] He told the three princes just referred to not to abolish the elevation. "*Nam alia res circumferri, alia elevari.*" The dignity of the sacrament might suffer were it carried about. He was even thinking of reviving the elevation (see vol. iv., p. 195, n. 4, and above, p. 146) which had been abolished by Bugenhagen.

It is not surprising that belief in the Real Presence, though so strongly defended by Luther, gradually evaporated in his Church largely owing to the inconsistencies just noticed. Eventually the Lutherans made their own the views of Zwingli and Melanchthon on the sacrament, though they retained an affection for certain vague and elastic terms concerning the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ.[1] Luther spoke of the attempts to introduce Zwingli's rationalistic doctrine of the sacrament at Frankfurt-on-the-Main as "a diabolical jugglery with the words of Christ," "whereby simple souls are shamefully duped and robbed of their sacrament." The thing was "handled in such a way that no one was certain what was meant or what to believe."[2]

Luther's views on the Church and on Divine Worship according to Protestant Criticism

A mass of inconsequence lies in the doctrine on the Church, which he is supposed to have retained, though, as a matter of fact, he completely altered it. Thanks to his conception of the Church as a practically invisible body his view of it was so broad as to leave far behind the old, Catholic idea; nevertheless, by and by his conception of the Church grew so narrow, that, as Harnack justly remarks, "in comparison, even the Roman view of it seems in many respects more elastic and consequently superior. . . . The Church threatened to become a mere school, viz. the school of 'pure [Wittenberg] doctrine.'" In this way arose "the Christianity of the theologians and pastors. . . . Luther on his own side repeatedly broke away from this view."[3] It is quite true that many contradictions are here apparent, as we shall have occasion to see later (vol. vi., xxxviii.). "His idea of the Church became obscured. The conception of the Church (communion of faith and communion

[1] "If I am right," says G. Kawerau, "the peculiar Melanchthonian form of the doctrine of the sacrament is pretty widely spread at the present time among Evangelicals, whether theologians or laity, as the form under which Luther's religious views on the sacrament are to be accepted," etc. "Luthers Stellung" (above, p. 445, n. 4), p. 41. On this point Melanchthon, as is notorious, really agreed with Zwingli. Of Zwingli, owing to his denial of the Real Presence, Luther wrote: "I, for my part, regard Zwingli as an unbeliever" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 342; Erl. ed., 30, p. 225), and for the same cause he "would show him only that charity which we are bound to display even to our foes." To J. Probst, June 1, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 354 f.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 558 f.; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 372 f.

[3] "DG.," 3^4, p. 872.

of pure doctrine) became as ambiguous as the conception of the '*doctrina evangelii*.'"

Then, with regard to his teaching on public worship. Though, as remarked above (p. 147 f.), he had in principle abandoned the view held by the olden Church regarding the necessity of external worship, and had robbed it of its focus, viz. the Sacrifice of the Altar, yet he was very far from logically following this out in practice.

His standpoint, according to Harnack, was originally this: "If it is certain that man may not, and indeed cannot do anything for God's sake, if the very idea of moving God by our works is the death of true piety, if the whole relationship between God and man depends on a believing disposition, i.e. on unshakable trust in Him, humility and constant prayer, if lastly no ceremony has any worth, then there can be no 'Divine Service' in the true sense of the term. The only direct service of God there is, is faith, otherwise the rule that obtains everywhere is that we serve God by charity towards our neighbour."[1]

Very soon, however, we find that in practice Luther reverts to some sort of common worship for the sake of the "common man," who requires to hear the Word, to assist at public prayers, and who must also have some kind of liturgy. At times Luther seems to speak of public worship as merely a "school for the imperfect," and, occasionally, he may really have meant it (above, p. 149 f.). By reforming the Mass and by the other directions he gave concerning public worship, scanty and faltering though they be, he introduced a practice which is at variance with his principles. "The seemingly conservative attitude he adopted in his emendation of the Missal, and his refusal to undertake a thorough reconstruction of divine worship led to many 'Lutherans' in the 16th, and again in the 19th century, entertaining questionable views on the specific religious value of public worship, its object and its practice. How very unlike Luther this is—seeing that Luther here can, and must, be corrected in his own light—and what a vast difference exists between the Evangelical and the Catholic doctrine of divine worship."[2] Harnack appeals to Gottschick's "Luthers Anschauungen vom christlichen Gottesdienst" (1887), as clearly demonstrating this. According to Gottschick the old Lutheran liturgy is not "even relatively a genuine product of the real spirit of the Reformation." In this theologian's opinion, Luther "really adopted the Roman Mass, contenting himself with a few alterations." Gottschick urges that an attempt should be made to construct "an entirely new edifice on the basis of the principles embodied in Luther's reforming views," etc.[3]

Gottschick is also right when he points out, that Luther

[1] P. 830 f. Cp. above, p. 44 ff. [2] P. 855, n. 1.
[3] Freiburg, 1887, p. 3.

"took but little interest in liturgy."[1] He was, however, set on bringing the people into the new faith and Church with the utmost circumspection and with as little fuss as possible. It is not necessary to recall here how successful was his policy of retaining the external forms, particularly on the unschooled masses who were unable to see below the surface. (Cp. vol. ii., p. 319 ff.)

Luther declared that he himself, "with a few friends, really constituted the ancient Church"—"a remarkable point of view," says Harnack, "explicable only by the idealism of his faith."[2]

This enabled him, so Harnack continues, "to abandon and assail the Catholic Church, and nevertheless all the while to protest that he stood with the olden Church. Though in assuming this attitude his faith was so strong that it mattered nothing to him how great or how small was the number of those who refused to bend the knee to Baal, yet it was of the greatest interest to him to show that he was a true member of that Church which had existed through the ages. Hence, he was compelled to prove the historical continuity of his position. But how could this be proved more surely than by means of the old creeds of the ancient Church still in force?"[3]

Here, again, we are confronted by the contradiction which runs through the whole of Luther's theology.

Even the very Creeds he had undermined by that subjectivism which he had exalted into a principle. Every Creed must submit to being tested by the Word of God, either by Luther himself or by any other man who considered himself equal to the task. Furthermore, the Word of God is subservient to the Canon set up by Luther or any other Christian scholar, and its sense may be determined by any Christian sufficiently enlightened to understand it. This was to open up the road to a Christianity minus any creed or dogma.

[1] *Ib.* [2] "DG.," 3[4], p. 866.

[3] *Ib.*, cp. p. 865: "Luther believed he was fighting merely against the errors and abuses of the mediæval Church. It is true he frequently declared that he was not pleased with the 'dear Fathers,' and that all of them had gone astray; he was not, however, clear-sighted enough to say to himself, that, if the Fathers of the Church had erred, then their definitions at the Councils could not possibly embody the truth. . . . Unconsciously he himself still laboured under the after-effects of the theory that the outward Church is the real authority."

Luther's claims, whether to represent the olden Church or to have furnished a better and firmer basis for the future, have never been more vigorously questioned by any Protestant theologian of modern days than by Adolf Harnack.

If we sum up in Harnack's words the results of modern Protestant criticism exercised on Luther's teaching, we find that they do not in the least countenance the obsolete view of some of Luther's latest admirers, viz. that he preserved what was good and "wholesome" of the existing dogmas and merely added "one, or two supplementary doctrines."[1] Even to-day we still hear it said that his belief and the "ancient dogma" were really "in complete harmony"; people, in support of this statement, appeal to what might naturally be considered the best witness, viz. to Luther himself, who was quite of this opinion. But when the defenders of this view begin to speak of Luther's "alteration" of dogma and of his having "reconstructed" it, then, says Harnack, it becomes "hard to tell what the words are intended to convey," in any case, it is an admission that "Luther's conception of faith in some way or other modified the whole of dogma."[2]

It would be more correct, according to Harnack, to say, that "Luther overthrew the whole doctrine of the olden and mediæval Church, retaining only a few fragments."[3] His own "attitude of mind towards ancient dogma" was not "altogether consistent." His "Christianity" is, as a matter of fact, "no longer inwardly bound up" with ancient dogma; his "conception of faith, i.e. what admittedly constituted his main contribution," stands in no need of the olden doctrinal baggage.[4] "In Luther's Reformation the old, dogmatic Christianity was set aside and replaced by a new, Evangelical conception. The Reformation is really [for Harnack's Protestantism] the end of the history of dogma. . . . If Luther agrees with this or that definition of the ancient or mediæval Church, the agreement, seen from this standpoint, is partly only apparent, partly a coincidence which can never be the result of any *a priori* submission to tradition."[5]

"So far as Luther left a 'Theology' to his followers it appears as an extremely complicated affair. . . . He did

[1] *Ib.*, p. 834. [2] P. 819. [3] P. 834.
[4] P. 820. [5] P. 861.

not therein give its final expression to Evangelical Christianity, but merely inaugurated it."[1] "A philosopher may, at a pinch, find the dogmas of the Greek Church wise and profound, but no philosopher could possibly find any savour in Luther's faith. Luther himself was not aware of the chasm that separated him from the ancient dogma, partly because he interpreted it in his own sense, partly because he retained some vestige of respect for the definitions of the Councils, partly, too, because he was only too pleased to be able to confront the Turks, heathen, Jews and fanatics with something definite, assured, exalted and incomprehensible.[2]

We may well make Harnack's concluding words our own: "It has been shown that the scraps of the olden belief which he retained do not tally with his views as a whole. . . . The whole does not merely rise above this or that dogma, but above all dogmatic Christianity in general,"[3] i.e. the doctrines of the Christian faith are no longer binding.

[1] P. 871. [2] P. 875.

[3] P. 896. Harnack takes great care to prevent his criticism of Luther giving rise to any impression that he himself is favourably disposed or indifferent towards Catholic dogma and Catholic life. He is shocked at the attitude of Erasmus, the defender of the Catholic view of man's free will even under Divine Grace, and declares his Diatribe against the "*servum arbitrium*" a "profoundly irreligious work," whereas Luther "had restored religion to religion" (see above, vol. ii., p. 292, n. 4).—He asks: "What does original sin represent to Catholics?" ("Dogmengesch.," 3[4], p. 749), as though Catholic dogma discarded it. He mocks at the "whole, half and quarter dogmas" of Catholics (*ib.*, p. 764) and at their handbooks of theology (p. 763). The Catholic "system of religion," so Harnack teaches, gave rise to "a perversion of the moral principles" (p. 749); "this system still works disaster both in theology and in ethics. . . . Since the 17th century the imparting of forgiveness of sins has been made a regular art." "But conscience is able to discover God even in its idol" (*ib.*). In other passages he places "devotion to the Sacred Heart" and "Mariolatry" on a par with the veneration of idols, though he admits that in Catholics "the Christian sense is not actually stifled by their idols" (p. 748). Only in these devotions and in the anxiety-breeding confessional does piety still live" (*ib.*).

Of the Pope he exclaims: "The Church has an infallible master, she has no need to trouble about her history, the living voice alone is right." He asks whether "the mediæval doctrine, now condemned to insignificance, would not gradually disappear," whether in time the Pope would not be credited "with a peculiar miraculous power," and whether ultimately he would not be regarded as a "sort of incarnation of the Godhead," etc. (p. 759).

"The saintly and so holy Liguori is the very opposite of Luther. . . . All his mortifications only entangled him more and more in the conviction that no conscience can find rest save in the authority of a con-

2. Luther as a Popular Religious Writer. The Catechism

During the last years of his life Luther was able to put the last touch to his literary labours by undertaking a new revision of some of his more important earlier works, and by assisting in the compilation of complete editions of his writings.

Thanks partly to his own literary labours, partly to the help and support of friends and pupils, he succeeded in gathering together those works which he desired to see handed down to posterity.

In 1541 and 1545 Luther's German translation of the Bible also received its finishing touch, and a new, amended edition was brought out, which, though slightly altered, still serves the Protestant congregations to-day. Moreover, the sermons of the Postils were revised afresh in order to furnish reading matter for the people and to help the preachers. In 1540 he himself published the first part of the Church-Postils (the winter term) and, in 1543, appeared the second portion, previously revised by Cruciger.[1] The Home-Postils appeared for the first time in 1544, edited by Veit Dietrich. At the same time a beginning was made with the complete editions of his literary works, the first volume of the German edition appearing in 1539 and the first volume of the Latin edition in 1545.

fessor. . . . Thanks to Liguori, absolute ethical scepticism now prevailed, not only in morals but even in theology. . . . In a number of questions, adultery, perjury and murder inclusive, he had known how to make light of what was really most serious" (p. 755). The doctrine of Probabilism was to blame for this, according to Harnack. Cp. J. Mausbach, "Die kath. Moral und ihre Gegner," 1911, p. 163 ff., and the "Kölnische Volksztng.," 1910, Nos. 485 and 571. The latter passage contains further proofs from Harnack's "Dogmengesch." of his insulting language and his lamentable ignorance of Catholic doctrines, practices and institutions.

[1] Of the Church-Postils the first half of the winter part up to the Epiphany had been published by Luther as early as 1522, and then continued down to Easter. The second part (summer portion) had been brought out in 1527 by his friend Stephen Roth. The sermons on the Epistles were only included in the collection in 1543, when the new edition appeared. W. Köhler begins his critical edition of the book of Church-Postils in Weim. ed., 10 (1911).

His Collected Works; his New Edition of the Church-Postils

Luther's German writings were collected by Cruciger and Rörer and printed at Wittenberg. The second volume was published only in 1548, after Luther's death. The compilation of the Latin writings was carried out with the aid of various friends, for instance, of Spalatin and Rörer, and also first saw the light at Wittenberg. Both these editions were eagerly sought after by the booksellers and a great sale was anticipated.

In the introductions which Luther prefixed to both collections he not only followed the then universal fashion of seeking to make a favourable impression on the reader by an extravagant display of humility, but also gave free play to his love for grotesque exaggerations. He had no intention of writing any "Retractations," as St. Augustine had done, however much such might be called for. Instead of this he professes to repudiate his books wholesale—though only, of course, to bring them forward again all the more vigorously. Whoever is familiar with Luther's ways will not need to be told how to interpret and appreciate what he here says. There is no doubt, however, that countless readers of these introductions fell into the trap and exclaimed: How great and yet how humble is the man who speaks in these pages!

Luther begins the prefaces to his German works[1] with the wish, which we have heard him express before: "Gladly would I see all my books unwritten or destroyed."[2] Why? "That Holy Scripture might be read and studied the more," that Word of God, "which so long lay forgotten under the bench." Because, in the Church, "many books and large libraries" had been collected "apart from and in addition to Scripture," and "without any discrimination," the "true understanding of the Divine Word had at last been lost." At any rate it was "good and profitable that the writings of some of the Fathers and Councils had remained as witnesses and histories." I myself, he says, "may venture to boast without pride or lying that I do not fall far short of some of the Fathers in the matter of the making of

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 401 ff.

[2] Cp. his words to Wolfgang Capito, July 9, 1537, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 247: "*Magis cuperem eos (libros meos) omnes devoratos. Nullum enim agnosco meum iustum librum, nisi forte De servo arbitrio et catechismum.*" Cp. above, p. 370 f.

books ; my life, however, I would not dare to liken to theirs." It is, however, his books that "provide the 'pure knowledge' of the Word." Nevertheless, he seeks comfort in the thought, "that, in time, my books, too, will lie dusty and forgotten," "particularly now that it has begun to rain and hail books." But whoever reads them, "let him see well to it that they do not prove a hindrance to his studying Scripture itself."

He then goes on to give some quite excellent directions as to how best to study Holy Scripture. He himself had pursued this method, and were the reader too to make it his own he would be able, "if necessary, to compose as good books as the Fathers and the Councils."

In the first place you must "altogether renounce your own judgment and reason," and rather beg God "humbly and earnestly to . . . enlighten you"; but if anyone "falls on it with his reason" . . . then the result is only a new crop of fanatics. Secondly, he recommends that the text of the Bible, i.e. "the literal words of the book, should be ever studied, read and re-read with diligent attention and reflection as to what the Holy Ghost means thereby." Thirdly, temptations : "As soon as the Word of God is being made known to you, the devil will attack you, make a real doctor of you, and, by his temptations, teach you to seek and love God's Word." He, too, had to thank his Papists and the raging of the devil at their bidding for having made him "a pretty fair theologian." Hence "*oratio, meditatio, tentatio.*"

But if anyone seeks to win praise by writing books, then let him pull his own ears and he will find "a fine long pair of big rough donkey's ears"; these he may adorn with golden bells so that everyone may point at him and say : "There goes the elegant animal who writes such precious books." No, so he concludes his preface, "in this book all the praise is God's."

In the preface to the first volume of his Latin works Luther seeks, not so much to enhance his knowledge of Scripture as he does in the German preface, but rather to explain in his own way how he was led to take up the position he did.

He represents the indulgence controversy as the sole cause of his breach with Catholicism and does so in language in which readers, unacquainted with the real state of the case, would detect simply a defence of his struggle against the "fury and wrath of Satan." Of the real motive of the struggle, viz. his rupture with the doctrines of the Church even previous to the Leipzig Disputation, or, indeed, to the Theses against Tetzel, he says never a word. On the other hand, he launches out into a dissertation on his Popish views at that time, which he urges had been deeper and more ingrained than those of Eck and all his opponents, and, which, unfortunately, had disfigured his earliest

writings. He had been terribly afraid of the Last Judgment but at the same time had longed ardently to be eternally saved. God knew that it was only by the merest chance that he had been drawn into public controversy ("*casu, non voluntate nec studio*"). Only when beginning his second exposition of the Psalms (1518–19) had the knowledge dawned upon him of that "Justice of God," whereby we are justified; before this he had hated the term "Justice of God."[1] He is at great pains to impress on the reader that he had "gradually advanced, thanks to much writing and teaching," and was not one of those, "who [like the fanatics], from nothing, become all at once the greatest of men . . . without labour, or temptations, or experience." No great stress need be laid on the statement he again makes at the commencement of this preface, viz. that he would fain see all his books "buried in oblivion," and that only the urgent entreaties of friends had won his consent to their bringing out a complete edition of his "muddled books."

In the evening of his life Luther could look back with a certain satisfaction on the numerous popular works he had composed for the instruction and edification of the masses and the "simple," and on the success with which they had been crowned. Again and again his fondness for thus instructing the populace had drawn him into this sphere of work; he had always striven with great perseverance and patience to better, both as to their language and their matter, the little tracts he composed. How highly he valued such works of instruction we can see from the writings which appeared from time to time as precursors of his Catechisms. They show how diligent he was in dealing with popular religious subjects.

He himself bears witness to his laborious literary labours and their results in the preface to his Church-Postils of 1543.[2] Conscious of what he had achieved he there quotes the passage where St. Paul says that the faithful were "enriched in all things, in all knowledge and understanding," etc. (1 Cor. i. 5). "In the same way we may say to our Germans that God has richly given us His Word in the German tongue. . . . For what more can we have or desire?" He points to the catechism which he has preached "clearly and with power," to his exposition of the Commandments, of the Our Father and the Creed; in his writings they would find explained "Holy Baptism, the

[1] Cp. above, vol. i., p. 388 ff.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 18 ff.

Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, the keys, the ban, and absolution. We have been instructed definitely how each one is to understand his own state and calling and behave himself; whether he be a cleric or a layman, or of high or low estate. We know what conjugal life is, what widowhood and maidenhood, and how we are to live and act therein in a Christian manner."—Although the people were already sufficiently instructed on these points, and though Luther's teaching in so far as it was something new cannot meet with our approval, yet it must be admitted that in his writings for the people Luther treated of these things, according to his light, in language both popular and forcible.

Herewith, so he says in the same preface, you receive from my friend Cruciger the Church-Postils amended and enlarged, with its "lucid and amusing" explanations of the Gospel-lessons. Just as a mother pulps the food for her baby, so the Epistles and Gospels of the year have been pulped for you. As now they had already in print a corrected edition of the lives of the Saints, a German version of the Psalter and, in particular, the whole Bible in "good German," the preachers should be better able to teach the people how to be saved. "We have done our part faithfully and in full measure; let us therefore be for ever thankful to God, the Father of all mercies." Luther's allusion to his Postils as being "lucid and amusing," and to the "good German" of his translation of the Bible, are perfectly justified.

Luther, in 1527, spoke of his Church-Postils as the "best book I ever wrote . . . which, indeed, pleases even the Papists."[1] It is obvious that he bestowed this praise upon it in view of its positive contents. It is true that, some eight or nine years later, he declared with his customary exaggeration, he wished the "whole of this book could be blotted out"; this was, however, at a time when he was already planning a new edition to be undertaken by Cruciger, "which might be useful to the whole Church."[2] The work, however, even in its first dress, undoubtedly contained much that was good.

[1] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 23, p. 278 f.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 148. "Das diese Wort . . . noch fest stehen."

[2] To Nicholas Gerbel at Strasburg, Nov. 24, 1535 (1536 ?), "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 127.

Good Points and Shortcomings of Luther's Popular Works

Not only is the number of popular writings Luther composed surprising, but they are distinguished by the energy and originality of their style, and, in many passages where no fault is to be found with what he says, his instructions and exhortations are admittedly seasoned with much that is truly thoughtful and edifying. In spite of all the admixture of falsehood to the ancient treasure of doctrine a certain current of believing Christianity flows through these popular writings and contrasts agreeably with both the more or less infidel literature of recent times and the shallow religious productions of an earlier date.

The mediæval language, feelings and world of thought, all so instinct with faith and piety, find a splendid exponent in Luther as soon as, putting controversy aside, he seeks to seize the hearts of the people ; such passages even make the reader ask whether the author can really be one and the same with the writer who elsewhere fulminates with such revolting malice against the Church of the past. Then, again, the plentiful quotations from the Bible in which he was so much at home, impart a devout tone to what he says without, however, in the least rendering it insipid or unnatural. From the latter fault he was preserved by a certain soberness of outlook, by his native realistic coarseness and his general tendency to be rude rather than sentimental.

Nor would it by any means be right were Luther's opponents to attribute the above favourable traits in his writings exclusively to the influence of the Catholic past. It is true that it is the latter which is mainly responsible for the elements of truth found in his writings, and also, not seldom, for the attractive and sympathetic way in which he presents his matter to the reader ; but to deny that the author's peculiar talent for speaking to the people and his rare gift of adapting himself to his German readers had also its share, would be to go too far. Luther, who hailed from among the lower class and had ever been in touch with it, knew the German character as well as any man (see vol. iii., p. 93 ff.). In his style he embodied to some extent the nation's mode of thought and speech. Hence his success with the Germans, whom he drew by the strongest ties,

viz. those of nationalism, into circles where the motherly warnings of the Church were no longer heard.

We are, however, unable to discern in his writings the mystical qualities which some of his admirers find everywhere. Echoes of the sayings of the olden mystics, such as we have had occasion to quote from his earlier works, obviously do not suffice to prove his own mystic gifts. Moreover, these echoes tend to become feebler as time goes on, and the nearer his literary labours draw to their close the less can they be considered to bear the character of true mystical productions. Certain leanings met with in Luther at the beginning, and even later, we have already had to characterise as the outcome of an untheological pseudo-mysticism.[1]

In his Exposition of the Magnificat (1521), for instance, we meet with trains of thought expressed in words which by their beauty recall those of the mystics of old. One cannot read without being edified what he says at the commencement of this little work, of the love of God which makes "the heart overflow with joy,"[2] or of the glories of Mary; of her, nothing greater can be said than that she was the Mother of God, "even had one as many tongues as there are leaves on the trees, blades of grass in the field, stars in heaven, or grains of sand on the sea-shore."[3] —Akin to this is the touching conclusion of his little writing on the Our Father, where he pictures the soul as pouring forth its desires to God the Father.[4] Such jewels are, however, not offered to his readers as frequently as his talent in this respect would have rendered desirable.

To what good account he put this gift in his earlier years is well seen even in his controversial "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen" (1520), where he is at pains to expound the sum of the Christian life, though "only for the plain man." Our present subject invites us to return once more to this side of the writing.[5]

Of works of charity Luther there speaks as follows: "The inward man is at one with God, is joyful and merry by reason of Christ Who has done so much for him, and all his joy is in wishing to serve God in return freely and out of pure love. In his flesh, however, he finds a will which is quite other and which wishes to serve the world and to seek what it pleases. But this, faith cannot bear, and it sets vigorously to work to check and restrain it. As St. Paul says, Rom. vii. [23]: I see another law in my members

[1] Vol. i., p. 175 ff.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 548; Erl. ed., 45, p. 217.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 573=250.
[4] *Ib.*, 2, pp. 128–130=45, pp. 204–207.
[5] Cp. above, vol. ii., p, 28 ff.

fighting against the law of my mind and ensnaring me in the law of sin."[1]

Later, coming to the works imposed upon man by self-restraint, he says: "So much of works in general, such as it suits a Christian to practise against his own flesh. Now we have to speak of works which he does for other men. For on this earth man does not live by himself but among other folk. Hence he cannot live without performing works for them, for he has to speak and have dealings with them. . . . Look how plainly Paul makes the Christian life to consist in works done for the good of our neighbour. . . . He instances Christ as our example and says [Phil. ii. 6–7]: 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal to God, and yet emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,' and doing and suffering all things for our sakes alone. In the same way the Christian man, though he is free, ought willingly to become a slave in his neighbour's service, and treat him as God through Christ has treated us, and all this, too, without reward; to seek nothing thereby but to be well-pleasing to God, and to think thus: See, God in and through Christ has bestowed on me, unworthy and guilty wretch that I am, without any merit, and solely out of pure mercy, an abundance of riches, piety and salvation. . . . Hence, in my turn, I will readily, gladly and without reward do what is well-pleasing to such a Father Who has heaped upon me His unspeakable riches, and be a Christ to my neighbour as Christ was to me; only what I see him to need and what is useful and profitable to him, will I do, now that, by my faith, I myself have all things abundantly in Christ. See, how joy and love of God spring from faith, and, how, from love comes a ready, willing, cheerful life of service towards our neighbour."[2]—"It is thus that God's gifts must flow from the one to the other and become common to all, so that each one cares as much for his neighbour as he does for himself. They flow to us from Christ, Who, in His life, took us on Him as though He had been what we are. From us they should flow to those who need them."[3]

Though, intermingled with such excellent matter, we find ever-recurring allusions to his peculiar doctrine of justification by faith alone, and though he fails to see the true organic connection between good works and the life of faith and thus condemns to inanity all works not performed out of perfect charity, yet it cannot be gainsaid that certain aspects of neighbourly love are here admirably portrayed.

Later on we often miss this sympathetic tone, for it was blighted by his polemics. As for his aptitude for instructing the people he retained it, however, to the end.

In the Exposition of the Our Father, of which the dialogue

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 30; Erl. ed., 27, p. 189.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 34 f. = 195 f. [3] *Ib.*, p. 37 = 199.

of the soul with God forms a part, he lays down at the outset in striking, popular guise the need of prayer, the value of the simple Paternoster, the profit to be derived from weighing well its contents, and also the beauty of the virtue of humility.[1] His explanation of the Hail Mary, for all its brevity, contains practical and valuable hints as to how God is to be honoured in all.[2]

In a very useful booklet entitled "Einfeltige Weise zu beten"[3] (1534), Luther assumes the garb of an instructor on prayer and attempts to show how the forms in common use, the Our Father, Ten Commandments and Creed, provide matter for prayer even for busy laymen, and how the latter, by meditating on each separate word or clause, may rise to perfect prayer. "When good thoughts press in upon us," he says, for instance, explaining the latter practice, "then the other prayers may be neglected and all our attention given to such thoughts which should be listened to in silence and on no account be thwarted, for then the Holy Ghost Himself is preaching to us; one word of His sermon is far better than a thousand prayers of ours. And I, too," he adds, "have often learnt more in one such prayer than I could from much reading and composing."[4]

In the "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken,"[5] exhorting all to pray for the public needs, he speaks alluringly and with great religious fervour. Urging his readers to pray for the divine assistance, he takes one by one, as was indeed his wont, the thoughts suggested by the Our Father.[6] "Our comfort and defiance, our pride, our daring and our arrogance, our insistence, our victory and our life, our joy, our honour and our glory are seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. There, devil, just you touch a hair of His!" The power of his words is heightened by his references to the nearness of the Last Day, the advent of which was foreshadowed in the downfall of both Papal and Turkish power. He even declares that the certainty of being heard depended on the spiritual struggle being waged in defence of the Evangel against the popish "blasphemers, persecutors and God-forsaken children of the devil"; where

[1] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 2, p. 80 ff., 9, p. 122 ff.; Erl. ed., 21, p. 159 ff.
[2] *Ib.*, 15^2, p. 318 ff. [3] *Ib.*, 23, p. 215 ff. [4] *Ib.*, p. 221.
[5] *Ib.*, 32, p. 75 ff. [6] *Ib.*, p. 89 f. Cp. above, p. 418 ff.

these had their way and were fighting, there nothing was to be looked for save ruin; there God's "angry hand was raised in vengeance against all the devils and Turks, against Mahmed, Pope, Meinz, Heinz and all the miscreants."[1] Hence, even in a tract intended as an exhortation to prayer and to promote a great work of Christian charity, quite other sentiments gain for the time the upper hand.

This brings us back to the remark we have frequently had to make when describing other writings of Luther's meant for the common people.

All too often his exhortations are disfigured by unmeasured vituperation or uncalled-for controversy of the most bitter kind. In the "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken," referred to above, Luther is seen at his worst in the excursion he makes therein against the abuses—then indeed very bad—of the usurers, particularly because they had ventured to say that "Luther does not even know what usury is."[2] He, altogether forgetful of meekness, also attacks the ungrateful Evangelicals in a highly unseemly manner, because they refused to submit to the stern reproofs of their preachers: "Let them fare to the devil and die like pigs and dogs, without grace or sacrament, and be buried on the carrion-heap. . . . Those men who wish to go unreproved thereby admit that they are downright rogues. . . . They deserve to hear Mahmed, the Turk, the Pope and the devil and his mother rather than God. Amen, Amen, if they will have it so."[3] Of the Catholics he says in the same "Vermanunge," that the foes of the Evangel among the Catholic princes, "traitors, murderers and incendiaries that they are," knew full well that his was the "true Word of God," yet, instead of accepting it, they would "much prefer to behave towards us like Turks, or were it possible, like very devils, not to speak of their being ready to serve, aid, counsel and abet the Turks"; they said, "If God in heaven won't help us, then let us call in all the devils from hell. . . . This I know to be true."[4]

It was no mere passing fit of temper that induced him in his old age so to disfigure his exhortations. In another pious writing, the "Circular Letter to the Pastors," sent around two years previous, and also dealing with the war against the Turks, he says: "The Papists do not pray and are so bloodthirsty that they cannot pray"; hence let *us* pray, he says; "but, when they start with their bloodthirsty designs against the Evangel, then all must fall upon them as upon a pack of mad dogs."[5] Such words scattered broadcast over Germany could not possibly serve to promote union or to strengthen the resistance to be offered to the danger looming from the East. They merely throw a lurid light on the chasm Luther cleft in the heart of the

[1] *Ib.* [2] P. 77. [3] P. 84.
[4] P. 97. [5] "Briefe," 5, p. 169, Feb., 1539.

nation, and on the internal dissensions which were weakening the Empire and making it an object of ridicule to the Turkish unbelievers.

In the preface to his Church-Postils (1543), Luther exhorts the pastors to leave those, who "wish to be left unpunished," to "die like dogs"; the rooks and ravens, jackdaws and wolves would sing the best vigils and dirges for the souls of such proud wiselings.[1] He not only wishes them to fulminate against such men but also desires, that, in the sermons, "certain instances of the Papal tyranny under which we once groaned in misery be introduced."[2]

Such was his anger with his foes that Luther even goes so far as to say in his exposition of the Hail Mary, that the Papists "cursed" instead of blessed, the fruit of Mary's womb.[3]—In the tract "How to pray" "Peter Balbier" is warned to bear in mind the "idolatry of the Turk, the Pope and all false teachers";[4] nor is ridicule of the praying priestlings wanting;[5] he then exhorts Peter in the most pious of language to imitate his example, viz. "to suck at the Paternoster like a baby, and to eat and drink it like a man," "never wearying of it"; he was also "very fond of the Psalter," turning "the whole as far as possible into a prayer,"[6] and, when he had "grown cold and disgusted with saying prayers," would take his "little Psalter and escape into his own room," etc.[7]—But even his homely exposition of the Our Father is not free from a polemical bias.[8]

With the beautiful and useful thoughts contained in his preface to the Larger Catechism, to the annoyance of the thoughtful reader, he mingles abuse of the "lazy bellies and presumptuous saints" of his own party,[9] to say nothing of the inevitable outbursts against Catholic practices. Here, too, the thought of the devil, by which he is ever obsessed, makes him represent Satan's wiles as the best and most powerful incentive to the study of the Catechism.

Even his earlier Exposition of the Magnificat is spoilt by a controversial colouring,[10] and, moreover, is overclouded by the circumstance that he wrote it at the very time when the menace of the Diet of Worms was at its worse. Looking out for a powerful protector, he dedicated his writing to Duke Johann Frederick of Saxony, the future Elector, who had wished him luck in his crusade against the Papal Ban. Luther extols the Duke's piety at the beginning of the work. But was he not anxious to make a good impression himself by his Exposition of the Magnificat? To impress his readers that he was a man enlightened by God and living in union with Him? We may notice how pathetically he depicts the righteous man (and we naturally think of him)

[1] "Werke," Erl, ed., 7^2, p. 21. [2] *Ib.*, p. 22.
[3] *Ib.*, 15^2, p. 319. [4] *Ib.*, 23, p. 217. [5] *Ib.*, p. 222.
[6] P. 223. [7] P. 215. [8] Cp. *ib.*, p. 215 f.
[9] *Ib.*, Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 126; Erl. ed., 21, p. 28.
[10] *Ib.*, 7, pp. 551 ff., 558, 565 f., 568, 580, 596, 599, 602=45, pp. 222 ff., 231, 240 f., 244, 259, 280, 285, 289.

submitting to be persecuted for the Word of God, and awaiting with heavenly resignation succour from on high, without in the least striving to protect himself. He who is persecuted, he writes, "must humble himself before God as unworthy that such great things should be done through him and commend everything to His mercy with prayer and supplication."[1]

Another motive which inspired the publication of his works of edification was, as he himself admits, to wrest the Catholic prayer-books from the people's hands. It is true, he says, his intention is "simply and honestly" to supply the people with spiritual food. But he also alludes to the "manifold wretchedness arising out of confession and sin," and the "unchristian stupidity found in the little prayers offered to God and His Saints," which he is obliged to assail. Even where his peculiar doctrine makes no appearance in his instructions he is not oblivious of its interest, even though he assures us, seemingly with the utmost sincerity, that he was going to see whether, by his writings, "he could not do his very foes a service. For my object is ever to be helpful to all and harmful to none."[2] He saw well of what help the mere existence of pious books would prove to his party; the more pious and innocent they were, the more they would promote his cause and smooth the way for him. The simplicity of the dove thus openly flaunted, nevertheless contrasts unpleasantly with the wisdom of the serpent which is only too apparent.

As to what is lacking in Luther's religious writings: Any reader familiar with the manuals of instruction and piety in use towards the close of the Middle Ages will at once perceive a great difference between the importance they attach to self-denial, self-conquest and the struggle against the evil inclinations of nature and that attached to them by Luther.

In the "Imitation of Christ," for instance, the great stress laid on self-denial gives an effective spur to every inward virtue. In Luther, with his twin ideas of faith alone and the irresistible power of grace, this main feature of the religious warfare falls decidedly into the background. Is it a mere coincidence that in the Larger Catechism self-denial and penance are not mentioned among the means for preserving chastity?[3] Chastity itself is there dealt with in a curiously grudging fashion. The so-called Evangelical Counsels, which fell from our Lord's own lips and had been eagerly pursued in the past by those seeking to lead a life of

[1] *Ib.*, p. 584=265; cp. p. 586=267.
[2] *Ib.*, 2, p. 80=21, p. 160.
[3] Cp. *ib.*, 30, 1, p. 160 ff.=21, p. 69 ff.

perfection, are naturally altogether ignored by Luther. With him, too, the wholesome incentive to good provided by the hope of supernatural merit for heaven had also, owing to his theory, to be set aside. The appeals to the motive of holy fear which he makes are too rare and too powerless to be of much avail. He had clipped with a rude hand the two wings of the spiritual life, viz. fear and the hope of reward, which bear it upwards and without which man cannot rise above the things of sense.

In Luther's works of edification, as pointed out above, we miss the school of virtue, the advance from one step of virtue and perfection to another, such as had grown up into a wise and recognised system, thanks to the experience of antiquity and the Middle Ages.[1] With him everything begins with a rash breach with the past. Even the use made of the example of the Saints is painfully defective. An easy-going tendency hides the poverty of the aims and a shallow mediocrity lames the upward flight. Here, again, the fact that the author turns his back so rudely on the traditions of the earliest ages and the holy practices of his fathers, brings its own punishment. For a multitude of inspiring and perfectly legitimate acts of prayer and virtue in which the Christian heart had found strength and gladness are passed over by him in dead silence, or else scoffed at as mere "holiness-by-works." While this is true of his practice, his theory, too, was wanting in that clear and solid justification and development which the theology of the older divines had enabled them to introduce into their teaching.

Lovers of Luther can, however, claim that in him two qualities were united which are rarely to be found combined, and possibly belong to no other popular religious writer of the age, viz. first, a wealth of ideas suggested by reminiscences, now of the Bible, now from the pages of human life; secondly, the writer's wonderful imagination, which enables him to clothe all things in the best dress in order the more easily to win his way into the hearts of his readers.

In consequence of this his writings will always find approving friends, not only in Lutheran circles but also among those who for literary or historical reasons are inter-

[1] Above, p. 84 ff.

ested in a form of literature bearing so individual a stamp, and know how to overlook their imperfections. The reasons, however, are sufficiently obvious why the Church by a general prohibition (though it does admit of exceptions) has set up a barrier against the study of any of Luther's works by her children, and why she bids her faithful to seek spiritual food only in those books of instruction and edification which she sanctions.

The Catechism

The ignorance of the people in religious things, of which Luther was made aware during the Visitation in the Saxon Electorate in 1527, led him to compose a sort of Catechism, "which should be a short abstract and recapitulation of Holy Scripture."[1] He was desirous of providing in this way a manual for the "instruction of the children and the simple," and more particularly of supplying fathers of families with an easy means "of questioning and catechising their children and dependents at least once a week (as was their duty), and seeing what they knew or had learnt of it."[2]

Thus, at the commencement of 1529, or possibly as early as 1528, he was at work, first, on the (Shorter) Catechism "for the rude country-folk," as he writes to a friend,[3] and also preparing mural tablets ("*tabulæ*") which set out the matter "in the shortest and baldest way."[4] Of these tablets his pupil Rörer says, on Jan. 20, that some of them hung on his walls while the Catechism ("*prædicatus pro rudibus et simplicibus*") was still in process of making.[5] It was in this form that the "Shorter Catechism" first appeared, but, in the same year (1528) these tablets were collected into a booklet entitled the "Enchiridion."[6]

Luther was at the same time at work on a fuller German Catechism which was intended to supply the heads of

[1] Great Catechism. Preface of 1530. See below, n. 6.

[2] *Ib.*

[3] To Martin Görlitz, Jan. 15, 1529, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 43: "*pro rudibus paganis.*"

[4] See above, vol. iv., p. 234.

[5] The passage first given by G. Buchwald, now in the Weim. Luther ed., 30, 1, p. 428 f.

[6] Ed. O. Albrecht, Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 239 ff. Formerly Erl. ed., 21, p. 5 ff.; "Symbol. Bücher," [10] ed. Müller-Kolde, p. 349 ff., etc.

families, and more particularly the preachers, with further matter for their instructions. This work, under the title of "Deudsch Catechismus," was finished and printed in April, 1529,[1] and in May appeared a Latin translation of the same. This was what was eventually termed the Larger Catechism.

In the preface to the Shorter Catechism Luther puts on the shoulders of the Catholic bishops the blame for the fact, that, the "common folk, particularly in the villages, knew nothing whatever of Christian doctrine." He also admits, however, that, among the Evangelicals, there were "unfortunately many pastors who are quite unskilled and incapable of teaching." Hence it came about that the people "knew neither the Our Father, the Creed nor the Ten Commandments," and "lived like so many brute beasts and senseless swine." "And how can it be otherwise," he asks the pastor and preacher, "seeing that you snooze and hold your tongue?" He accordingly requires of the ministers, first, that, in their teaching, they should keep to one form of the "Ten Commandments, Creed, Our Father and Sacrament," etc., and not "alter a syllable"; and "further, that, when they had taught the text thoroughly, they should see that the meaning of it is also understood"; finally, the pastor was to take the Larger Catechism and study it and then "explain things still more fully to his flock" according to their needs and their power of comprehension.

In spite of all this he has no wish that the particular method and form of his Catechism should be made obligatory; here again, according to his principle, everything must be spontaneous and voluntary. "Choose whatever form you please and then stick to it for ever."

Nevertheless whoever refuses to "learn by heart" the text selected is to be treated as a denier of Christ, "shall be allowed not a shred of Christian freedom, but simply be handed over to the Pope and his officers, nay, to the devil himself. Parents and masters are also to refuse them food and drink and to warn them that the sovereigns will drive such rude clowns out of the land," etc. This agrees with a letter Luther wrote to Joseph Levin Metzsch on August 26, 1529, in which he says that those who despise the Catechism and the Evangel are to be driven to church by force, that they may at least learn the outward work of the Law from the preaching of the Ten Commandments.[2]

Filled with anxiety for the future of his Church he warmly exhorts the pastors to provide for a constant supply of preachers and worthy officials. They were to tell the authorities and the parents, "of what a gruesome crime they were guilty, when they neglected to help to educate children as pastors, preachers,

[1] Ed. O. Albrecht, Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 123 ff. Formerly Erl. ed., 21, p. 26 ff.; "Symbol. Bücher,"[10] p. 375 ff.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 97 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 149).

and writers, etc. . . . The sin now being committed in this respect by both parents and authorities is quite beyond words ; this is one way the devil has of displaying his cruelty." We see from this that Luther's solicitude for the teaching of the Catechism had a practical motive beyond that lying on the surface. He wished to erect not only a bulwark but also a nursery for the Church to come ; for this same reason, in his efforts about this time on behalf of the schools (see vol. vi., xxxv., 3), what he had in view was, that, with the help of the Bible and the Catechism, they should become *seminaria ecclesiarum.*

In the preface to the Larger Catechism of 1530 Luther lashes those among his preachers who turned up their noses at the Catechism.

Many, he says, despise "their office and this teaching, some because they are so very learned, others out of laziness and belly-love" ; they will not buy or read such books ; "they are, in fact, shameful gluttons and belly-servers, better fitted to look after the pigs and the hounds than to be pastors having the cure of souls." To them he holds up his own example. He too was "a Doctor and preacher, nay, as learned and experienced as any of them," and yet he read and recited every morning, and whenever he had time, "like a child, the Ten Commandments, Creed, Our Father, Psalms, etc." ; he never ceased being a student of the Catechism. "Therefore I beg these lazy bellies or presumptuous saints, that, for God's sake, they let themselves be persuaded, and open their eyes to see that they are not in reality so learned and such great Doctors as they imagine."

The exhortations in this preface, to all the clergy to make use of and teach the Catechism diligently, contain much that is useful and to the point.

In other passages he nevertheless sees fit to emphasise what he says by false and odious reflections on the Papacy. "Our office is now quite other from what it was under the Pope ; now it is serious and wholesome, and thus much more arduous and laborious and full of danger and temptation."[1] Before him "no Doctor on earth had known the whole of the Catechism, that is the Our Father, Ten Commandments and Creed, much less understood them and taught them as now, God be praised, they are taught and learnt even by little children. In support of this I appeal to all their books, those of the theologians as well as those of the lawyers. If even one article of the Catechism can be learnt aright from them, then I am willing to let myself be broken on the wheel or bled to death."[2]

In the plan of both the Larger and Smaller Catechism Luther keeps to the traditional threefold division, viz. the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed and Our Father. To

[1] Preface to the Smaller Catechism.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 2, quoted by the editor in the Introduction to the Catechisms.

these he appends a fourth part on baptism and a fifth on the Supper, the only two sacraments he recognises. He also slipped in a short supplementary instruction on the new form of Confession before the chapter on the Supper.[1] The Smaller Catechism was provided from the very first with morning and evening prayers, grace for meals and an eminently practical "Household Table of Texts," consisting of appropriate verses for pastors, for their subordinates and pupils in general, for temporal authorities, for subjects, married people, parents, masters, children and also for the "young in general, for widows and for the parishes."

The language, more particularly of the Shorter Catechism, is throughout a model of simplicity and clearness.

We may find an example of his brevity and concision at the end of the "Creed"; the passage will also serve to show how greatly his teaching differed from that of the Church. After the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy *Christian* Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting, Amen," there follows in the Catechism the usual question: "What means this?" and the answer, with regard to the Church, is that the Holy Ghost "calls, gathers together, enlightens, hallows and holds the whole body of Christians on earth in Jesus Christ in one true faith; in which body of Christendom He free-handedly forgives me and all the faithful all our sins daily," etc. The paragraph ends, as do all the articles on the Creed, in the usual form: "This is true."

In spite of all peculiarity of doctrine in the Shorter Catechism all polemical attacks on the olden Church are carefully eschewed. In the Larger Catechism, on the contrary, they abound. Even under the First Commandment, speaking of the worship of God, the author alludes to what "hitherto we have in our blindness been in the habit of practising in Popery"; "the worst idolatry" had held sway, seeing that we sought "help, consolation and salvation in our own works." In the explanation of the article on the "Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints" it is set forth at the outset, that, "in Popery," "faith had been stuck under the bench," "no one having acknow-

[1] Cp. O. Albrecht, Weim. ed., 31, 1, p. 442 f. On the new Confession see above, vol. iv., p. 248 ff.

ledged Christ as Lord." "Formerly, before we came to hear [God's Word] we were the devil's own, knowing nothing of God or of Christ."[1]

On the other hand, several of Luther's doctrines find no place whatever in either of the Catechisms. For instance, those, which, according to the testimony of Protestant scholars quoted above, necessarily lead to a "Christianity void of dogma" (above, p. 432 ff.). The people and the pastors learn nothing here of their right of private judgment with regard to the text of the Bible and the articles of faith. Nor is anything said of that view of original sin which constituted the very basis of the new system, viz. that it is destructive of every predisposition to what is good; nor of the enslaved will, which is ridden now by God, now by the devil; nor of the fact that man's actions have only the value imputed to them by God; nor, finally, do we find anything of predestination to hell, of the "Hidden God" Who quashes the Will of the "Revealed God" that all men be saved, and Who, to manifest His "Justice," gloats over the endless torment of the countless multitudes whom He infallibly predestined to suffer eternally.[2] The reason for the suppression of these doctrines in catechisms intended for the general reader is patent. The dogmas they embody, in so far as they vary from the traditional, are too contradictory to form a solid theological structure. To what dangers would not the new doctrine have been exposed, and what would have been the bad impression on the reader, had mention been made in the Catechisms of such theories, even though, in reality, they formed the very backbone of the new theology?

Luther's Catechisms were well received and were frequently reprinted.[3] Many enactments of the secular rulers, particularly in the Saxon lands, insisted that his Shorter Catechism should be learnt by heart and his Larger Catechism be made the basis of the sermons.[4]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 31, 1, pp. 134 f., 188, 190; Erl. ed., 21, pp. 36 f., 101, 103.

[2] Cp. vol. i., p. 187 ff., etc.

[3] Cp. the "Bibliographie zum Grossen Katechismus," by O. Albrecht and J. Luther, "Werke," Weim. ed., 31, 1, p. 499 ff.; cp. *ib.*, p. 666 ff.

[4] For proofs, see Th. Kolde, "Symbol. Bücher,"[10] p. lxiii.

Mathesius wrote: "If Dr. Luther during his career had done nothing more than introduce the two Catechisms into the homes, the schools and the pulpits, reviving prayers before and after meals and on rising and going to bed, even then the whole world could not sufficiently thank or repay him."[1]—"Luther's booklet," declares O. Albrecht, "became a practical guide to pious patriarchal discipline in the home, and the very foundation of the education of the people in those German lands which had come under the influence of his Reformation. . . . Even in the Latin schools his *Parvus catechismus* became, in the 16th century, one of the most widely disseminated handbooks."[2]

In the heyday of their triumph the Catechisms were incorporated in the Book of Concord, first in German in 1580 and then in Latin in 1584, and were thus bodily incorporated in the Creed of the Lutheran Evangelical Church. They were accepted "as the layman's Bible in which all is comprised that is dealt with in Holy Scripture and which it is necessary for a Christian man to know."[3] Highly as Luther valued his Catechism,[4] still he certainly had never intended it to be enforced as a rule of faith, for we have heard him express his readiness to sanction the use of any other short and concise form of instruction. (See above, p. 484.)

Luther had nevertheless taken great pains over his work. He had been thinking of it long before he actually set to work on it. As early as 1526 he had spoken in his "Deudsche Messe und Ordnung Gottis Diensts" of the need of a "rude, homely, simple and good work on the Catechism for the congregation of true Christians which he was planning; indeed, he had already dealt with certain portions of the Catechism in his "Kurcz Form der czehen Gepott" (1520), and in his "Betbüchlin" (1522). It was probably owing to his influence that Jonas and Agricola were entrusted with the drafting of a catechism for boys. While engaged on this work, in 1528, he, as a final preparation for it, preached three courses of sermons on the Catechism. These sermons were first published in 1894 by G. Buchwald in "Die Entstehung der Katechismen Luthers," being taken from the notes by Rörer; Buchwald draws attention to the close connection existing between the sermons and the text of the Catechism.[5]

[1] "Historien," Bl. 63′. [2] Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 655.
[3] "Symbol. Bücher,"[10] p. 518.
[4] We may recall his statement that he would like to see all his books destroyed except two: "*Nullum enim agnosco meum iustum librum nisi forte De servo arbitrio et Catechismum.*" To Capito, July 9, 1537, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 247. See above, p. 471, n. 2.
[5] New edition by Buchwald, Weim. ed., 31, 1, p. 1 ff.

So well did Luther promote the teaching of the elementary truths of religion, that, in a notice given from the pulpit on Nov. 29, 1528, he was able to speak of a rule according to which it was the custom at Wittenberg four times in the year to preach four sermons on the Catechism spread over a fortnight.[1]

This custom lasted long and spread to other places.[2] Bugenhagen, so it is said on reliable authority, always carried Luther's Catechism with him.[3] He declared, in 1542, that he had already preached about fifty times on the Catechism,[4] and he seems to have organised and kept up the practice of the " catechism weeks " when pastor of Wittenberg ; at any rate the rules he drew up subsequent to 1528 insist repeatedly on such sermons being preached on the Catechism.[5]

Luther's Catechism and Ecclesiastical Antiquity

In the passage of his " Deudsche Messe " where he speaks of his idea on the teaching of the Catechism, Luther says, that he knew no better way to give such instruction than " that in which it had been given from the earliest days of Christianity and until now, viz. under the three heads : The Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Our Father " ; these three things contained all that was called for.[6] Hence he himself was far from sharing the opinion of certain later Protestants, viz. that, in the selection and methodical treatment of these three points he had struck out an entirely new line. He simply adapted the existing form of instruction to his new doctrines, which he cast into a shape suitable for popular consumption.

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 444.

[2] Mathesius, " Historien," Bl. 61 : " Just as at Wittenberg and in many other churches the useful custom still prevails of preaching on this Catechism four times a year for a fortnight, and of daily assembling for that purpose the children, servants and artisans. Many ministers also teach the Catechism on Sundays in addition to the Gospel, and assemble the children in summer for the recitation and explaining of the Catechism, as is, thanks be to God, the custom with us to-day."

[3] *Ib.*, Bl. 62′.

[4] O. Albrecht, " Der kleine Katechismus Luthers vom Jahre 1536," 1905, p. 94.

[5] Albrecht, Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 441.

[6] " Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 76 ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 232 (cp. p. 75= 231, and Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 434).

The Decalogue, together with Confession with which it naturally goes hand in hand, had assumed, ever since the 13th century, an ever-growing importance in the instructions intended for the people. In esteeming, as he did, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, Luther was simply following in the footsteps of the 14th and 15th century. Johann Wolff, the Frankfurt preacher, who is described on his tombstone as "*Doctor decem præceptorum*," as his Handbook for Confession of 1478 shows, was quite indefatigable in his propaganda on behalf of the use of the Decalogue in confession and in popular instructions."[1]

We must here call attention, above all, to the instruction habitually given in the home by parents and godparents before Luther's day; this "consisted chiefly in teaching the Creed and the Our Father, two points belonging to the oldest catechetical formularies of the ancient Church."[2] Luther himself had learnt these in the Latin school with the rest contained in the hornbooks, and on them in turn he based his own Catechism.[3]

Melanchthon speaks, in 1528, of the "Children's manual containing the Alphabet, the Our Father, the Creed and other prayers,"[4] as the first school primer which had come down from the past.

Even Mathesius admits that, "parents and schoolmasters taught their children the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Our Father, as I in my childhood learnt them at school and often repeated them with the other children, as was the custom in the olden schools"; he adds, however, that the "tiresome devil" had smuggled additions into the Catholic "A.B.C. book" and corrupted it with Popish doctrine, whereby servitors are "turned" towards the Mass; the devil "had also introduced into the school primer the idolatrous '*Salve Regina*' which detracted from the honour due to Jesus Christ, our one Mediator and Intercessor."[5]

[1] Thus Albrecht in his introduction to his new edition of the two Catechisms of Luther, Weim. ed., p. 435; he refers also to Falk's and Battenberg's editions of Wolff's "Beichtbüchlein" (see vol. iv., p. 254) and to J. Greving's "Zum vorreformatorischen Beichtunterricht" ("Veröffentl. aus dem K.-h. Seminar zu München," 3, 1, 1907, pp. 46–81).

[2] Albrecht, *ib.*, p. 436. [3] *Ib.* [4] Cp. Weim. ed., 26, p. 237.

[5] "Historien," Bl. 63. Mathesius, however, will only admit that, on the whole, "some fragments of the Catechism" had been retained in Popery. Luther's admirer cannot even recall that in Popery he "had ever heard . . . the Ten Commandments, Creed, Our Father or Baptism spoken of from the pulpit. . . . Of the absolution and consolation arising from a believing reception of the Body and Blood

In the 15th and 16th century priests were often urged to recite from the pulpit every Sunday the Creed and Our Father, sometimes also the Hail Mary, and the Decalogue was not unfrequently added.[1] A work by the Basle parish-priest, Johann Surgant, which appeared in 1502 and was many times republished, deals exclusively with the expounding of the above points to the people, supplies each with explanatory notes, and requires, in accordance with the existing rules, that the priests should carefully instruct the people in them ("*diligenter informent*"). It was an old custom to preach on the Catechism during Lent as Luther also had done in his younger days, taking for his subject the Ten Commandments and the Our Father; this custom, too, had probably been handed down from the time, when, during the weeks preceding the great day for baptism, viz. Holy Saturday, the catechumens were instructed in the Creed and the Our Father ("*traditio symboli et orationis dominicæ*").

The courses of sermons preached four times a year at Wittenberg also had their analogy in the Church's past. As early as 1281, a synod meeting in London under Archbishop Peckham of Canterbury had required, in the 10th Canon, that the parish-priest should rehearse every three months the principal doctrines of the Christian faith and morals simply and concisely.

Even in his Confession or examination before Communion of 1523[2] Luther had merely revived, under another form, an institution of the Mediæval Church, for, in the Confession before Communion, it had been customary to recite the principal articles of Christian faith.[3]

As to what Luther says, viz. that the instruction given to the people had formerly borne only on the three points named above, and that of the two sacraments treated of in his Catechism "sad to say nothing had hitherto been taught,"[4] it is only

of Christ I had to my knowledge never heard a word all my days before I came to Wittenberg, either in the churches or the schools, just as I cannot recall having seen any written or printed explanation of the Catechism in Popery" (Bl. 63 and 63′).—The ignorance of the facts of the case revealed in the latter statement is met with elsewhere in the rest of the passage of Mathesius's writing; he may have been unfortunate in his own personal experience, but he certainly exaggerates. That, before Luther's day, preaching was not everywhere sufficiently supplemented by catechetical instruction was undoubtedly to be regretted.

[1] Albrecht, *ib.*, referring to P. Bahlmann, "Deutschlands Katechismen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrh.," 1894, p. 38, and F. Cohrs, "Evangel. Katechismusversuche vor Luthers Enchiridion," ("Mon. Germ. Pædag.," vol. 20 ff.; vol. 23, 1902, pp. 233, 271). For popular religious instruction before Luther's day, see Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 1, p. 25 ff.; F. Cohrs, "RE. f. prot. Th.," 10^3, 1901, p. 135 ff., and F. J. Knecht, "KL.," 7^2, 1891, p. 288 ff.; cp. 249 ff.

[2] See above, p. 134 f., and vol. iv., p. 251.

[3] Albrecht, *ib.*, p. 444.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 212; Erl. ed., 21, p. 128.

necessary to say that numerous prayer-books and manuals on confession dating from the close of the Middle Ages contain abundant matter both on the sacraments and on other things touching doctrine.[1]

Before Luther's day the term Catechism had not been taken to mean the book itself, but the subject-matter which was taught by word of mouth and was confined to the points indicated above. It was in this sense that he said, for instance in the Table-Talk : " The Catechism must remain and be supreme in the Christian Church."[2] It was he and Melanchthon[3] who initiated the custom of applying the term not only to the contents of the volume but also to the volume itself.[4] Hence, it is verbally true, that, before Luther's day, there existed no " Catechism " ; the religious writings dealing with the subject bore other and different titles. Nor was the arrangement of question and answer regarded as essential to the body of instructions which went under the term of Catechism, a circumstance which also seemed to favour the assertion, that, before Luther's day, no such thing was known. But if question and answer be essential, then, even his own Larger Catechism could not rightly have borne the title, seeing that it has not this form. Nevertheless the system of question and answer had always been highly prized and had sometimes been made use of on the model of the questions put at baptism.

Amongst the older writings that most nearly approach the ideal of the Catholic Catechism, deserve to be mentioned two books then widely known which are constantly making their appearance in the thirty years before Luther's day, viz. the " *Fundamentum æternæ felicitatis* " and the " *Discipulus de eruditione Christi—fidelium compendiosus,*" the second of which also contains questions and objections. Both go beyond the three main points given above and include a popular summary, intended for the use of the clergy, of the seven sacraments, the nine sins, the works of

[1] Albrecht, *ib.*, p. 445, referring to Geffcken's " Der Bilderkatechismus des ausgehenden MA.," 1855, pp. 86, 98 f., 108, 177, etc., and particularly to Thalhofer, " Die katechetischen Lehrstücke im MA.," (" Mitteil. der Gesellschaft f. deutsche Erziehungs- und Schulgesch.," 15, 1905, p. 188 ff.

[2] Cp. Weim. ed., 30, 1, p. 454.

[3] " Corp. ref.," 1, p. 643 (1523).

[4] Albrecht, *ib.*, p. 454 f.

mercy and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.[1] It was also the usual thing for books on the Decalogue to include other points of importance, and thus to deal with almost the whole of the matter treated of in the Catechism. In fact, as Zezschwitz says, there was rather an "over-abundance of material in the domain of catechetics" than any dearth.

Finally, the use of the so-called tables, i.e. sheets printed only on one side and each giving a different point of the Catechism, which, as we saw, was the form under which Luther's Shorter Catechism first appeared (above, p. 483), was nothing new either. "Luther followed in this respect a custom then widespread,"[2] as is shown by the studies of Geffcken, Cohrs and Falk (1908); Falk, in particular, carefully sought out the Catholic tablets of the kind still in existence. So far only one example of Luther's printed tablets, and that in Low German, has been brought to light.[3]

Hence the statement that Luther's Catechism was his own "creation" calls for considerable revision.

The directness and concision of his style must, however, always commend themselves to the reader, even to those who regret that in this work he tampered with the doctrines of the olden Church. But, as regards the division, the work rests on a foundation hallowed by centuries of ecclesiastical usage. This even Protestants have now begun to see.

According to F. Cohrs, even in Luther's "Kurcz Form," we see "Evangelical catechetics springing up on the soil of the popular religious literature of the Middle Ages."[4]

Otto Albrecht, like others, admits, that, in his appreciation of the three chief points of instruction, and more particularly of the Decalogue, Luther "is in agreement with the similar efforts made in the 14th and 15th century." It was according to him "only natural" that Luther, in his "Kurcz Form" of 1520 and again in his "Deudsche Messe" of 1526, should protest, that, "in these three points, he was safeguarding the heirloom of the Church." In this instance his critical attitude towards the past comes out only in his exclusion of the Hail Mary, in his rearrangement of the three parts, and, of course, above all, in the new meaning he gives to them. Moreover, according to Albrecht, Luther's gradual enlargement of his "Betbüchlin" shows that

[1] F. J. Knecht, *loc. cit.*, p. 292 f. The "Discipulus" was compiled as early as 1416. Cp. "Zeitschr. f. kath. Th.," 1902, p. 419 ff.

[2] Albrecht, *ib.*, p. 561.

[3] Facsimile, *ib.*, p. 241, and better still in Otto Albrecht's "Der kleine Katechismus Luthers," 1905.

[4] "Katechismusversuche" (see above, p. 491, n. 1), p. 241.

the latter was but an " Evangelical version of the mediæval prayer and confession handbooks, which themselves, in turn, had led up to the Catechisms of the 16th century."[1]

Such a view also fits in with Luther's own words far better than did the exaggerations formerly current. He says, for instance, in 1532, in his " Brieff an die zu Franckfort am Meyn " : " This we have received even from the first beginnings of Christianity. For there we see that the Creed, the Our Father and the Ten Commandments were summarised as a short form of doctrine for the young and the simple, and were, even from the very first, termed the Catechism."[2] Even in the original preface to the Larger Catechism he had declared that, " for the sake of the common people he was keeping to the three points which have ever been the rule in Christendom in ages past."[3]

3. The German Bible

Already at the Wartburg Luther had begun the great work of substituting for the existing vernacular translations of Holy Scripture one written in good German and based on the original languages of the books of the Bible.

The idea seems to have dawned on him during his enforced rest at the Wartburg, when, as he tells a friend, he passed his time reading the Bible in Greek and Hebrew and in studying these two languages.[4] Just then he was entirely under the sway of those new views of his which prompted him to set up the Bible in the stead of all ecclesiastical authority. Melanchthon, too, so it would appear, had also some share in his resolution.

The Work of Translation and its Conclusion

In his solitude Luther first broached the New Testament, first because its contents more nearly touched the controversy in which he was engaged, and, secondly, because the

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 31, 1, pp. 435–437.

[2] *Ib.*, 30, 3, p. 567 ; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 383 f.

[3] *Ib.*, 30, 1, p. 130=21, p. 31. Cp. above, p. 147 f., the passage taken from Luther's " Deudsche Messe."

[4] To Spalatin, May 14, 1521, " Briefwechsel," 3, p. 154 : " *Bibliam græcam et hebræam lego.*" To the same, June 10, 1521, *ib.*, p. 171 : " *Hebraica et Græca disco et sine intermissione scribo.*"

New Testament could be translated more easily without learned assistance. When first announcing his plan, on Dec. 18, 1521, he mentions, that, "our people are asking for it."[1] "I shall put the Bible into German," so he tells his Wittenberg colleague, Canon Nicholas Amsdorf, on Jan. 13, 1522, "though in so doing I am taking upon myself a burden beyond my strength. Now I see what translating means, and, why, so far, no one who undertook it ever put his name to it. As for the Old Testament I cannot touch it unless you are here and give me your help. Could I find a hiding-place with one of you, I would come at once so as to start the work of translation from the outset with your assistance. The result ought to be a translation worthy of being read by all Christians. I hope we shall give our German folk a better one than that which the Latins have. It is a great and glorious work at which we all should toil, for it is a public matter and is meant to serve the common weal. Tell me what hopes you have of it."[2]

In barely three months, with the aid of the few helpers he was able to secure in his Patmos, he had finished the first rough draft of the New Testament, which he took with him on leaving the Wartburg for revision among his friends at Wittenberg. "Philip and I," so he wrote from Wittenberg, on March 30, 1522, to Spalatin, who was then Court preacher, "have now begun to furbish the translation of the New Testament; it will, please God, turn out a fine work. We shall need your help too, here and there, for the choice of words; hence get ready. But send us simple words, not the language of the men-at-arms or of the Court; the translation must, above all, be a homely one. May I ask you to send me straightaway the [German] names and the colours of the precious stones mentioned in Apocalypse xxi., or better still the stones themselves, if you can get hold of them at Court or elsewhere."[3] Luther finally received specimens of the stones through the good offices of Cranach. In order the better to understand certain texts, he also wrote to Spalatin, Mutian and Dr. George Sturz on the subject of ancient coinage.[4] He also incidentally consulted the Court preacher as to the exact German translation of the names of various wild animals with which the latter

[1] To Johann Lang, *ib.*, p. 256.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 271.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 325.
[4] Cp. *ib.*, n. 4 in Enders.

would probably be acquainted owing to the hunts indulged in by the Court in that neighbourhood.[1]

The printing of the New Testament was begun at Wittenberg by Melchior Lotther in the first days of May. Proof-sheets were sent to Spalatin and Duke Johann of Saxony. From the beginning of July three printing presses are said to have run off daily 10,000 "chartæ," i.e. 5000 folio sheets, so as to produce an edition of 3000 copies. On Sep. 21, 1522, the New Testament appeared with a frontispiece and a number of woodcuts by Lucas Cranach; the title-page bore the words: "Das Newe Testament Deutzsch. Vuittemberg." Neither year nor printer's name were given, nor even the name of the translator, probably in order not to prejudice the sale of the book in those regions where Luther stood in bad odour. Luther received no fee for the work any more than for his other writings. As the first edition was at once sold out a new and amended one was published in Dec.; the two editions afterwards became known as the September and December Bibles. Editions still further amended were published at Wittenberg in 1526 and 1530. Altogether some sixteen editions of the New Testament were printed in this town before 1557, while at the same time more than fifty reprints saw the light in Germany, for instance, fourteen at Augsburg, thirteen at Strasburg and twelve at Basle.

While still busy on the New Testament Luther set to work on the Old, this time with the regular and expert assistance of Melanchthon and Matthæus Aurogallus, the Wittenberg Professor of Hebrew. Owing to the difficulty of the work and the constant hindrances encountered by the author, the work did not appear all at once, but only piecemeal. As early as 1523 the Books of the Pentateuch were published at Augsburg and Basle in two successive editions, four times reprinted in the same year. The historical books from Josue to Esther followed in 1524. The remainder, comprehensively described as the "Prophets," followed in separate parts, Job, the Psalms and the "Books of Solomon" in 1524, and the Prophets, properly so-called, only at longer intervals.[2]

[1] Dec. 12 (?), 1522, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 37: "*Bestias istas describas et nomines per species suas.*" There follows the list.

[2] See the list of Luther's writings at the end of our vol. vi.

The difficulties of the work and the unwearied pains taken by the compiler are frequently apparent in Luther's letters to his friends.

He writes, for instance, to Spalatin: "Job gives us much trouble owing to the exceptional grandeur of his style; he seems as reluctant to submit to our translation as to the consolations of his friends; he refuses to march and wants to remain for ever seated on his dunghill; it almost seems as though the writer of the book had wished to make a translation impossible. For this reason the printing of the third part of the Bible [i.e. of the Old Testament] proceeds but slowly."[1]—Later, in the preface to the Book of Job, he said: "In our work on 'Hiob,' we, Master Philip, Aurogallus and I, were sometimes barely able to get through three lines in four days. But now, my friend, that it is translated into German everyone can read it and master it and run his eyes over three or four pages without meeting a single obstacle, nor does he perceive what hindrances and stumbling-blocks lay in the path he now glides along as easily as down a greasy pole; to us, however, it cost much toil and sweat to remove all the hindrances and stumbling-blocks."[2]

He writes to his friend Wenceslaus Link of his difficulties with the prophet Isaias on which, with Melanchthon,[3] he was hard at work in June, 1528: "We are now sweating at the translation of the prophets. Good God, what a great and arduous task it is to cram the Hebrew writers into a German mould! They absolutely refuse to submit to the barbarism of the German tongue. It is as though a nightingale were being forced to exchange its sweet melodies for the call of the cuckoo."[4]

With particular care did Luther devote himself to polishing up each new edition of the Psalms; it is easy to see his efforts, not merely to render the words accurately, but also to breathe into his translation some of the fervour and poetic feeling of the sacred text.

As to the prophets; with the exception of Isaias, he set to work on them only in 1530, beginning with Ezechiel during his stay at the Coburg. In Feb., 1532, he had finished the prophets, which appeared in a volume apart. He was now at last able to set to work on what he called the "Apocrypha"; regarding them as popular tales his translation of them was very free. Among these he included Judith, the Book of Wisdom, Tobias, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the first and second Book of the Machabees, portions of Esther, etc. They found a place at the end of his Old Testament.

[1] Feb. 23, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 300.

[2] "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," 1530, "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 636; Erl. ed., 65, p. 109.

[3] "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 277, n. 4.

[4] June 14, 1528, *ib.*, p. 291.

At the commencement of 1534 his Bible, which was now finished, was published for the first time as a complete work under the title : " Biblia, das ist die gantze Heilige Schrift Deudsch," with his name and that of the printer, Hans Luft (Lufft). The Old, like the New Testament, was illustrated by Lucas Cranach, the subjects having been selected and distributed by Luther himself. The Old Testament was also furnished by Luther with marginal glosses in the form of short notes explanatory of the text, or giving his own commentary on it. Prefaces were prefixed to each division. A new edition of the Old Testament was ready as early as 1535.

New reprints of the whole Bible or of portions of it were constantly making their appearance, those appearing at Wittenberg always embodying the author's latest emendations. From 1530–40 the latest bibliographer of Luther's Bible enumerates thirty-four Wittenberg editions and seventy-two reprints in other parts of Germany ; from 1541–46 there were eighteen Wittenberg editions and twenty-six similar reprints.[1] According to a fairly reliable authority no less than 100,000 complete Bibles left Lotther's press at Wittenberg between 1534 and 1584.[2] The same bibliographer describes in the Weimar edition eighty-four original editions and 253 reprints as having appeared during Luther's lifetime. Since each edition may be reckoned to have comprised from one to five thousand copies, one is almost justified in saying that Germany was flooded with the new work or portions of it. Half the South-German printers found a living in printing Bibles. In this respect the history of Luther's works supplies the best data for the history of the printing and bookselling trade in that age.

It is true, no doubt, that many bought Bibles, because, among Protestants, it was considered the right thing for every man of means to have his Family-Bible. In the case of many alienated from the practices of the Church, the possession and the reading of the Bible constituted, as a Protestant recently put it, a sort of " *opus operatum*," yet, according to the same writer, " the contradiction between the Bible and the moral behaviour " of some of its most

[1] Paul Pietsch, in " Werke," Weim. ed., " Deutsche Bibel," 2.

[2] *Ib.*, p. xxiv, in the preface by K. Drescher, the present chief editor of the Weimar edition.

zealous readers "cannot in many instances be questioned."[1] Others, however, no doubt provided themselves with the new Bible from really religious motives and interests, and refreshed and fortified themselves with its sublime and edifying eloquence. We may assume this to have been the effect of Luther's Bible in the case of the simple folk who had been led unconsciously into Lutheranism, or had grown up in it, and who owed their acquaintance with the work to its use in public worship, though they themselves may have been unable to read, or, maybe, not rich enough to purchase a Bible of their own.[2]

His success encouraged Luther, diligently to revise his work. So far, not a single edition had appeared without some alterations, and, as we see from certain recently discovered data, he again went through the Psalter in 1531, "with great pains and labour," and also set about revising the whole of his Bible subsequent to Jan. 24, 1534—being assisted in both these undertakings by Melanchthon and Cruciger. Nevertheless another revision of the Bible on a large scale was begun in 1539, as we have fully learnt only in our own day from two witnesses and from the notes in Luther's own private copy.

One of the witnesses is George Rörer, the Wittenberg deacon who corrected the Bible proofs, and who declares: "In 1539 they went through the Bible once more, from the beginning even to the Apocrypha [i.e. the Old Testament], and gave a clearer German rendering to certain words and phrases, as may be seen from the book with the sermons [i.e. the notes] delivered by this same man in 1541–2."[3]

The other witness is Mathesius, who had been a guest at Luther's table in the spring of 1540 and whose detailed account was already generally known, though, owing to the fresh data discovered, it now appears in a stronger light. "When first the whole German Bible had appeared and temptations had improved it day by day, the Doctor once more gathered the Holy Books, and, with great earnestness, diligence and prayer, went through them again; and . . . D. Luther formed a sort of Sanhedrin of his own, composed of the best men then to be had, who met for several hours once a week before supper in the Doctor's monastery, namely, D. Johann Bugenhagen, D. Justus Jonas, D. Cruciger, Master Philip, Matthæus Aurogallus and also M. George Rörer, the proof-reader. Doctors and learned

[1] Pastor Risch, "Welche Aufgabe stellt die Lutherbibel der wissenschaftl. Forschung?" ("N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1911, pp. 59 ff., 116 ff.), p. 129 f. "Die deutsche Bibel in ihrer gesch. Entwicklung," 1907, by the same author.

[2] Cp. Risch, *ib.*, p. 121 f. O. Reichert, "Luthers deutsche Bibel" ("RGl. Volksbücher," iv., 13, 1910), pp. 8, 14, 24, 31, 44.

[3] Reichert, "Luthers deutsche Bibel," p. 32.

men from outside frequently took part in this sublime work, for instance, Dr. Bernard Ziegler [Professor of Hebrew at Leipzig], D. Forstemius [Professor at Tübingen, who in 1540 became Provost of Nuremberg]. . . . The Doctor, having first gone through the Bible already published, . . . came into the consistory with his old Latin and new German Bibles, always bringing also the Hebrew text along with him. Mr. Philip brought with him the Greek text, and Dr. Cruciger both the Chaldean and the Hebrew Bible. The professors had also their Rabbinic books with them. D. Pommer had also a Latin copy before him with which he was very well acquainted. Each one had prepared beforehand the text to be discussed and had consulted the commentators, Greek, Latin and Jewish. Then the President propounded a text and listened to what each one in turn had to say on the peculiarity of the language or on the commentaries of the ancient doctors. Beautiful and instructive things are said to have been said during this work, some of which M. George [Rörer] noted down, which were afterwards printed as short glosses and notes in the margin of the text."[1]

At the meetings the minutes were taken by Rörer, a capable amanuensis. What has been preserved of them gives us a glimpse into the workshop, where, from 1539 to 1541, the revision of the Bible undertaken by Luther was carried out. Of Rörer's minutes those are still extant which record the conferences on the revision of the translation of the Psalms, and also a considerable portion of those on the work of 1539 on the Old Testament of which Mathesius speaks.[2]

The account, as is so often the case with the Table-Talk, is written in a mixture of Latin and German; it is also distinguished by the same spontaneity and absence of constraint. It records discussions on all the books of the Old Testament saving Chronicles, Esdras and the "Apocrypha." We have, in all, notes of meetings held on thirty-two various dates. Very often the sessions were broken owing to the members being otherwise engaged, or absent on journeys. The speakers mentioned by name, Luther in particular, often give their views on the sense of the original or on its German rendering. As a rule Luther first submits his proposals or difficulties and then listens to the views of the rest. At times interesting side-lights are thrown on contemporary history, and we also meet some noteworthy *obiter dicta*.

[1] "Historien," Bl. 160′ ff. G. Lœsche, "Joh. Mathesius' Ausgewählte Werke," 3 ("Bibliothek deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen," 9), p. 315 ff.

[2] Discovered at Jena by Buchwald, but only known so far in extracts. See p. 501, n. 3, and "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 353, n. 12.

On Genesis xii. 11 ff. Melanchthon, alluding to Abraham's lie in Egypt when he declared his wife to be his sister, says: "I think he did this rather out of greatness than out of weakness of faith." Luther, who elsewhere does not blame Abraham for this[1] and also sees its reason in the greatness of his faith,[2] here nevertheless disagrees with Melanchthon and says, "I prefer to regard it as weakness, for, we are all of us in the same hospital."

Regarding the building of Solomon's Temple (3 Kings vi.), he says: "We shall have much trouble over this horrid building. I should like to know where the seventy or eighty thousand carpenters with their axes came from. Did the whole land ever hold so many inhabitants? It is a queer business. Maybe the Jews corrupted the text. They cannot have had any carts but must have carried everything. I wish I had done with the book. I am a very unwilling builder at Solomon's Temple. . . . It was finished about Pentecost. It must have been very lofty, some hundred cubits in height; our tower here is not much over sixty cubits."

Now and then Luther brings the words of the Bible into relation with his own experiences. This he does especially in the minutes of the meetings held for the revision of the Psalter, which, of course, lends itself more easily to such application. In one passage (Ps. xviii. [xvii.] 15) he says, referring to his "combats": "At the Coburg I saw my devils flying over the forest." When discussing Ps. lxxiv. (lxxiii.) he lets fall the words: "I will send this as a farewell to my Papists and hope they will howl Amen to it, if God so will. Amen." Of Ps. ciii. (cii.) he remarks: "I recite this Psalm daily when I am merry; it is a fine, cheerful Psalm for a poor soul." Of Isaias xi. he says, extolling the prophet: "No prophet speaks so grandly as 'Jesaia,'" and, on 1 Kings iii., again having a fling at the Papists: "Things went on pretty much the same as they do in Popery; nobody studied and the Bible was thrust aside."

Only excerpts of the records of these meetings have so far appeared in print. They are, however, to be published in the Weimar edition of Luther's works.[3]

Besides the minutes, a small copy of both Testaments with notes which Luther made use of in his revision has been discovered at Jena. It is an edition printed in 1538–9, or possibly in 1540, then the most recent edition. The notes show a great many alterations in the text, chiefly such as had been agreed upon at the meetings, in Genesis, for instance, no less than two hundred. The entries, so far as they represent the result of the conferences, constitute the link between Rörer's minutes and the new edition subsequently published. The alterations in

[1] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 3, p. 139 *sqq.*

[2] *Ib.*, p. 142. See vol. iv., p. 109.

[3] Cp. what O. Reichert says in "Die Wittenberger Bibelrevisionskommissionen von 1521 bis 1541," in Koffmane, "Die hds. Ueberlieferung von Werken Luthers," 1, 1907, p. 97 ff., and Risch's Articles (above, p. 499, n. 1), p. 78 ff.

the latter seem to be taken, sometimes from the minutes, sometimes from Luther's copy. "The Jena Old Testament," says O. Reichert, is "a document that exemplifies Luther's way of working; it proves that he felt he had never done enough for his best work, that he was always busy at it and was indefatigable in his efforts to produce a German Bible from the original text."[1]

The outcome of the work of revision was a great improvement in the Wittenberg Bible of 1540 and 1541 printed by Hans Lufft. Another edition, dating from 1542, embodied in the main most of the new emendations. The edition most highly prized is, however, the last that appeared during Luther's lifetime, viz. that of 1545, which also contains new corrections. It has been called the "*editio typica*" of Luther's Bible, though, possibly, that of 1546, with new alterations by Rörer, to which Luther is supposed to have given his approval, should be regarded as such.

The detailed account of this revision is not the only witness we have to the care and pains Luther bestowed on the work, for we have also the recently discovered manuscript copy of his translation, which Luther sent to the printers. The latter consists of portions of the Old Testament written with his own hand: Part of the Book of Judges, then Ruth, Kings, Paralipomena, Esdras, Nehemias and Esther, also Job, the Psalter, Proverbs, the Preacher and the Canticle of Canticles. They were published by the Magdeburg pastor, E. Thiele, in the Weimar edition from two MSS. at Zerbst and Berlin.[2] Here we see how assiduously Luther corrects and deletes, how frequently he wrestles, so to speak, after the correct expression and cannot at times satisfy himself.[3] Luther's manuscript copy of the New Testament has not so far been discovered.

In consequence of the above publications the examination into the origin of the text of Luther's Bible and into the principles which determined its compilation enters upon a new phase. In the same way the significance of the text for

[1] "Luthers deutsche Bibel," p. 41, where examples are given from the notes and emendations to be published later.

[2] Weim. ed., 1 and 2.

[3] Reichert says, *ib.*, p. 26: "There is hardly a more interesting document to be found in the domain of research concerned with Luther's German Bible." He gives a facsimile of Ps. xlv. (xliv.), xlvi. (xlv.). Four facsimiles in Thiele, vol. 2.

the history of the German language stands out more clearly because such discoveries bear the strongest testimony to Luther's untiring endeavours to adapt himself to the true German mode of expression, to his dexterity in finding synonyms and to his skill in construing.

On the Language and the Learning Displayed in Luther's Bible

The excellence of Luther's translation of the Bible from the point of view of its German is unquestionable.

For, what the author above all aimed at, viz. a popular rendering of the text which should harmonise with the peculiarities of the German language, that he certainly achieved. Through his Bible, too, owing to its general use throughout so large a portion of the nation, he exerted a greater influence on the upbuilding of the German tongue than by all his other vernacular works.

In his other writings, in which he was ever striving to improve his mode of speech, we may often find real models of good German, which, consciously or not, had a widespread influence on the language. In the case of his Bible, however, this was far more noticeable, for not only was his language there more polished, but the fact of the text being so frequently committed to memory, quoted from the pulpit and surrounded by that halo which befits the Word of God, helped to extend its sway.

Not only did he take infinite pains to translate aright such phrases as ring unfamiliar to Western ears, but he was also assisted by his happy gift of observation and his knack of catching the true idiom. His habit of noting the words that fell from the lips of the populace, or, as he says, of "looking into the jaw of the man in the street," [1] was of the utmost service to him in his choice and use of terms. "No German talks like that," "that is not put '*germanice*,'" "the German tongue won't stand that," and similar utterances, frequently recur in the minutes of the conferences when he is finding fault with the renderings proposed by others or even with his own earlier ones.

[1] *Ib.*, 65, p. 110, "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," Sep. 8, 1530. Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 14, p. 401 ff.

It was fortunate for him, that, as his medium of intercourse, he chose to use a kind of German, not indeed unknown before, but, which, with his rare gifts, he exploited with greater independence and vigour. Wittenberg was favourably situated from the geographical point of view, and the students who flocked thither from every part of Germany were ever bringing Luther fresh elements, thus enabling him to select among the various dialects what was common to all. The short journeys he made and his correspondence with so many people in every part of Germany were also of assistance to him.

"I have," Luther says himself, "no particular, special German language of my own, but I use the common German language so that both the Upper and the Lower Lands may understand me. I write according to the speech of the Saxon Chancery which is used by all the princes and kings of Germany. All the Imperial Cities and Royal Courts in writing make use of the language of the Saxon Chancery and of our sovereign; hence this is the kind of German most widely spoken. The Emperor Maximilian, the Elector Frederick and the Duke of Saxony, etc., have fused all the different modes of German speech in the whole Roman Empire into a uniform language."[1] Hence, on his own admission, the language was not new. "The language of Upper Germany," he says, "is not the real German; it is broad and uncouth and sounds harsh. But the Saxon tongue flows quietly and easily."[2]

When we try to determine in detail the language of which Luther made use, and how much he actually did to further its development, we are met by great difficulties. German philologists have not yet been able thoroughly to explore this domain, because so little is known of the German prints of the 15th century, of the manuscripts and the various groups of writers.[3] Protestant theologians have often contented themselves with a few quotations from certain German philologists and historians, which exaggerate the case in Luther's favour.[4] Of such exaggerations

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 313. Table-Talk.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 421. Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 378.

[3] K. Müllenhoff and W. Scherer, "Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa, 8–12 Jahrh.," 1864, p. xxix.

[4] Cp. Risch, p. 138, in the article mentioned above, p. 499, n. 1.

Protestant scholars had been guilty even in the 16th century;[1] for instance, the German preacher and grammarian, Johann Clajus, says, in 1578: "As the Holy Ghost spoke pure Hebrew through Moses and Greek through the Apostles, so He spoke pure German through His chosen instrument Martin Luther. It would not otherwise have been possible for a man to speak so accurately."[2]

In answer to the question, "What is the task imposed upon learned research by Luther's Bible?" Risch, an authority on this subject, remarks: "The historical connection of the language used by Luther in his Bible with the German language of yore has still to be brought to light"; the studies undertaken so far have dealt too exclusively with one particular side of the question, viz. with the vowel sounds used by Luther and by his predecessors; too much stress has also been laid on the Middle-High German diphthongs (î, û, ìu[ü], becoming ei, au, eu).[3] Luther's relations with the past in the matter of the construction of sentences and arrangement of words, and more particularly in his vocabulary and the meaning he gives to his words, have not been set forth scientifically enough, though abundant material for so doing is to be found in Grimm's German dictionary, in Hermann Paul's and elsewhere.

Then again, as Paul Pietsch points out in the introduction to the 1st volume of Luther's Bible in the Weimar series, we have not been sure hitherto even of the exact text of Luther's translation. Owing to the divergencies in the text it was "not possible, with the help of the various

[1] H. Stephan, "Luther in den Wandlungen seiner Kirche," 1907, p. 30, remarks: The orthodox period of Lutheranism venerated "Luther's translation of the Bible with an admiration as boundless and naive as had it been a palladium."

[2] Cp. H. Böhmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," 1906, p. 143, who there (in the first edition, though not in the second) points out that even Grimm's colleagues and successors did not share his own warm appreciation of the language of the German Bible. According to Müllenhoff the foundation of New High German had been laid a century and a half before Luther, who represents, not its beginning but its zenith period (see pp. 504, note 3). "If in spite of this," says Böhmer, "it cannot be denied that the German of Luther played an important part in reducing the German language to unity, still this was not Luther's doing." "The stress laid by Protestants on the language of Luther undoubtedly did more to hamper than to further the victory of the common language" (p. 144). "Luther himself was the first to protest against being considered the founder of a new German tongue" (p. 145).

[3] *Ib.*, p. 132 f.

editions scattered throughout the world, to arrive at any final opinion concerning the language employed in the Bible or the alterations it underwent." Hence, only on the completion of the Weimar series shall we be able to form "an adequate idea of the position Luther's translation holds in the history of New High German."[1]

Finally, there is still some doubt as to what Luther actually meant by his statement concerning the German of the Chanceries of Saxony, the Empire and the Imperial Cities being the model on which his own language was based, and as to how far he was speaking the truth. We must in all probability go much further back than the time of the Emperor Maximilian of whom Luther speaks, viz. to the Chancery of the Luxemburg kings of Bohemia, for it was the latter who established, about the middle of the 14th century, a sort of New High German which later on spread to Silesia, to Upper and Lower Lusatia, and, then, thanks to the Emperor Frederick III, to the Chancery of the Hapsburgs and to those of the Saxon Electorate, Hesse and Mayence. In those early days the new language was a mixture of the dialects of Upper and Central Germany, of those of Austria and of Meissen.[2]

Chancery German, however, restricted as it was by its very nature within certain well-defined limits and hampered by the stiffness of the Court, was not likely to prove of much service to Luther, who sought a language which should be understood by the people and be full of strength and variety. Hence we are driven to surmise that it was rather in the homes of the people that he sought his language, turning to good account his gift for coining what he needed from the various German dialects.

As regards the state of the language in Germany at that time, E. Gutjahr has recently endeavoured to prove that the efforts at colonisation and the movement of the people, more particularly from the 12th to the 14th century, had paved the way in Saxony for the rise and spread of a new, common language (New High German), and that in towns like Halle a new patrician type of language had sprung up which Luther had only to assimilate. In his "Anfänge der neuhochdeutschen Sprache vor Luther" (1910), the author gives us an outline of the conclusions he has

[1] Preface to the first volume of the Bible, p. x.
[2] Müllenhoff, etc., *ib.*, p. xxvii ff.

reached and which he hopes to set forth at greater length later. Whether he will succeed in making out his case remains, however, to be seen.

The language of the Saxon Chancery was, according to Gutjahr, even in Luther's day, not merely the "polite language of general intercourse," but one in which all the German Courts were versed, the Imperial, Austrian one of Maximilian, as much as that of the Saxon Electorate under Frederick the Wise."[1] From this language, "into which he infused new elements taken from the mouth of the people," Luther forged a mighty weapon for his work, being all the more readily led to do so seeing that the "reforming movement found its mainstay among the patrician classes of the Saxon Electorate."[2] Nevertheless we must not assume the existence in Luther's day of any common written language in the modern sense. The foundation for such a common language had indeed been laid, but as yet it did not exist. Before our nation could lay claim to a common language of its own—our Modern High German as written—a long time had still to elapse."[3]

The language used by Luther in his Bible was made still more widely known owing to the work being at once reprinted even where other dialects prevailed, though as a rule some alterations were made to bring it into line with the idiom in use; at times the printers did no more than append a short vocabulary explaining such Saxon phrases as might be strange to the reader. In this way the new Bible, the language of which was so admirably suited to become a common one, penetrated everywhere, even into out of the way districts where the most divergent dialects obtained.[4]

Its influence was all the more important now that small principalities were springing up at the expense of the unity of Germany and threatened the language with further disintegration. The Lutherans were the first to perceive and work against this danger, though the Catholics were by no means unmindful of it too. Catholics, too, sought to take advantage of the translation, and, in some cases, even went too far in this. Luther once declares in his usual vein: "Our opponents read it more than do our own people";[5] he also mentions that Duke George had said: "Let the

[1] P. 223 f. [2] P. 224. [3] P. 222.

[4] Cp. Zerener Holm, "Studien über das beginnende Eindringen der Lutherischen Bibelübersetzung in die deutsche Literatur," 1911 ("Archiv. f. RG.," Ergänzungsband, 4).

[5] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 251.

monk finish translating the Bible into German and then get himself gone."[1]

What in the case of Protestants favoured the influence Luther's Bible exerted on the language, was, on the one hand the profound interest aroused in the reader by his inspiring pen, and, on the other, its appearance at a time when, though the art of printing had been invented, the whole world, and more particularly Germany, judged from a literary, theological standpoint, was still lying to a large extent fallow and was thus more readily dominated by such a work as his, and that not merely as regards the matter but also as regards the style. Men of learning, owing to humanistic influences, wrote almost exclusively in Latin. The use of the German language for theological and religious subjects, save in sermons and popular writings, was something unusual ; in fact, such a thing was rather discountenanced owing largely to the publication of German works which had made a wrong use of Scripture.

In Lutheranism the New High German of the Bible found its way not only into educated, ecclesiastical circles but also to the common folk, into whose ears the preachers assiduously dinned countless favourite texts in their new form ; it also became familiar to the teachers and children in the schools. No more powerful lever for the furtherance of New High German could have been found. A century after, New High German had become the language of the churches and schools in the regions subject to Luther's influence, whilst the South German and Low German dialects had largely lost their hold.

When all is said, however, the secret of such success is not to be entirely understood unless we also take into account the religious position Luther occupied in the eyes of his followers. All who venerated him as having thrown a new light on religion, valued and honoured the language used by a mind so imperious, so strong and versatile, and, when it so pleased, so sympathetic. H. Böhmer says very truly of the old German Protestants : " Luther became for the Germans the authority on speech because he was their supreme authority on faith and personal conduct. Had he not been a religious reformer and had he not bequeathed to Evangelical Germany in his Bible a book, which,

[1] *Ib.*

on account of its religious importance was bound to be looked upon as a model of language, he would never have exercised so powerful an influence on the written and spoken language."[1]

Nevertheless, to assert, that, by his German Bible and his other writings Luther was the actual founder of New High German is to go too far, quite apart from the fact that German, as now written, is no longer identical with the German of Luther's Bible and other writings. We cannot take seriously Grimm's assertions that "New High German may in point of fact be called the Protestant dialect," or that "Luther's language, owing to its noble, almost marvellous purity and its mighty influence, was both the germ and the foundation of the New High German tongue."[2]

"Protestants," says Pastor Risch, "have hitherto been disposed to undervalue the literary use made of the German language before Luther's day, particularly in the religious domain, and to exaggerate Luther's importance in the history of the tongue. Only in so far as he succeeded in seizing upon and bringing out all the forces and possibilities latent in the language, was it possible for his work to be truly creative and epoch-making. To catch the idiom of the people, not to force a new language upon it with his German Bible, was, on his own admission, Luther's aim. The German language prepared the way for Luther to a greater extent than at first sight appears."[3]

Two other considerations will serve still further to curtail the importance of Luther's services to the German tongue.

First of all it must be pointed out that many very coarse elements found their way into his popular works, and thus, unhappily, into the written language, and, secondly, that a large number of words and phrases peculiar to South Germany and which were accordingly unknown to Luther, find, for this reason, no place in works, with the result that the German language suffered.

We may speak with less reserve of the merits of the new translation so far as it is based on the original languages of the Bible, and on the Latin Vulgate then in general use. Even before Luther started on his work attention had been

[1] "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," p. 150.
[2] Jakob Grimm, "Deutsche Grammatik," 1, 1², 1870, Preface, p. x.
[3] In the articles referred to above, p. 499, n. 1 (p. 137 f.).

called to the original text; indeed, as it happens, the scholar who was the primary cause of Luther's studying the original language was his Catholic opponent, Erasmus, who himself brought out the Greek edition of the New Testament. To Luther, however, belongs the honour of having been the first to tread the new philological paths with a German version.

In his somewhat hurried version of the New Testament he used the Greek text as well as the Vulgate. In the same way, in his translation of the Old Testament, he went back to the original so far as his knowledge of Hebrew allowed, and, where this was insufficient, sought the help of others.

The principle he followed, viz. to make the Bible plain to the German reader by explaining its meaning, so far as this can be done by a translation, brings us, however, face to face with other questions.

Luther had a high opinion of the accuracy and clearness of his work. He says of it: "I can with a good conscience testify that I have shown the utmost fidelity and diligence therein, and have never thought to deceive."[1]

"No one would believe what labour it has cost except those who worked with us," so he said in his last years according to Mathesius, when looking back on the success of his undertaking. "This Bible—not that I would praise myself but the work speaks for itself—is so good that it is better than the Greek or Latin translation, and more is to be found in it than in all the commentaries. For we remove the "hindrances and stumbling-blocks out of the way so that other people may be able to read without difficulty."[2] Reducing this eulogy to its proper proportions we may indeed allow that Luther eliminated the "hindrances and stumbling-blocks" from his German translation, being no literalist, but anxious above all to put into plain German what sounded strange or difficult.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 640; Erl. ed., 65, p. 114. "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ." Before this he had said: "Of what an art and labour translating is I have full experience, and therefore I will allow no Pope-ass or Mule-ass, who has never attempted it, to set himself up as judge or critic. . . . If there is to be any faultfinding, I will attend to it myself." And later: "Their abuse is my highest praise and glory. I am resolved to be a Doctor . . . and they shall not rob me of this title till the Judgment Day; this much I know for certain."

[2] "Historien," p. 82.

Yet such a system of translation can only within certain limits be regarded as the right one. As to whether Luther always kept within these limits, and as to how we are to regard the use he made of this freedom in particular instances, is a point on which even the greatest admirers of the German Bible disagree. Pastor Risch, the expert repeatedly referred to above, remarks pessimistically: "Scarcely any of those who have written on Luther's method of translating have gone beyond mere generalities. They are satisfied with dishing up again more or less skilfully Luther's principles as set forth in his 'Von Dolmetzscheñ.' Not even my own work on the German Bible (1907) do I exempt from this criticism. Research must bring us by inductive reasoning to the recognition of the root principle which alone can explain the many thousand variant readings we meet with to-day in the [Weimar] German Bible (vols. i. and ii.), and in Bindseil's critical edition,"[1]—It is, however, to be feared that in very many instances the "root principle" supposed to underlie Luther's work will fail in practice. His hasty, precipitate work in the Wartburg (the completion of the New Testament in three months) puts any real scholarly method out of the question. The fact that barely a week was allotted to each Gospel precludes the use of any well-considered principles in the work of translation.

Again, Luther often deviates far too much from the original text and takes too many liberties in his efforts to be plain. To this must be added the fact, that, owing to his insufficient linguistic attainments, he fails in many instances to reach the real sense of the original sacred text, to say nothing, of course, of the numerous critical emendations made at a later date in the texts. Hence Protestants have sometimes judged the scholarship of Luther's Bible rather harshly. Josias Bunsen, for instance, called Luther's translation "one of the most inaccurate, though showing signs of great genius," and declared that, in it, there are "three thousand passages which call for revision."[2] E. Nestle, the Protestant philologist and Bible expert, referring to the revision which had taken place in Germany, says of the defects of Luther's Bible: "A comparison with the

[1] *Ib.*

[2] F. W. Nippold, "Christian Josias Freiherr von Bunsen," Leipzig, 1868–1871, 3, p. 483.

English or Swiss work of revision shows how much further we might and ought to have gone."[1]

The most outspoken critic is, however, Paul de Lagarde, the Protestant theologian and Orientalist of Göttingen. In an article likewise dealing with the so-called "Revised Bible" of 1883,[2] he devotes more than five pages to a list of passages from Isaias, the Book of Proverbs and the Psalms, which Franz Delitzsch had been compelled to retranslate even earlier.[3] To this list he appends another long one of passages, which he holds to be manifestly mistranslations of the original.

Thus, to quote only one important instance, the Messianic prophecy of Jacob in Genesis xlix. 10, should be rendered: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda . . . till he come that is to be sent," or "that is prayed for" (שילה), whereas Luther translates שילה incorrectly by "hero" and thus robs the wonderful text of some of its force. De Lagarde notes, that elsewhere Luther himself renders Malachias iii. 1: "The Lord Whom you seek shall speedily come to His temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire." Beside such mistakes Luther's allusion to the hedgehog that builds nests and lays eggs (Isaias xxxiv. 15) can only be regarded as a curiosity and a slip on his part. This hedgehog was among the victims sacrificed in the revised Bible of 1883.

The same critic also complains, that, Rom. iii. 23, even in the revised Bible, has: "For they are sinners," whereas the Aorist demands the translation: "They all have sinned." He shows how, as early as 1839, Tholuck had drawn attention to the vast dogmatic importance of Luther's suppression of this Aorist.[4]

With still greater show of reason De Lagarde finds fault with other wilful deviations from the text; he refers to those pointed out by Döllinger in "Die Reformation" and again insisted on by Janssen, and then by Paulsen in his "Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts." These false renderings have, however, out of a wrong regard for Luther, been retained in the Lutheran Bible even to the present day.

Luther's scant concern for the text where it runs counter to his ideas calls for further discussion.

Luther's German Bible Considered Theologically

Bearing in mind Luther's character we can well understand how sorely he was tempted during his work to make

[1] "RE. f. prot. Theol.,"[3], Art. "Bibelübersetzungen," p. 72.
[2] "Mitteilungen," vol. 3, Göttingen, p. 1899, p. 335 ff. (reprint of the art. in the "Gött. Gel. Anzeigen," 1885, 2).
[3] P. 359 ff. [4] P. 365.

the text square with his own doctrine, the more so since the translation was intended as a popular explanation of the Bible. When, moreover, one remembers his arbitrary way of proving his doctrine, and the entire freedom with which he was wont to handle other religious matters connected with antiquity, which, though not in the Word of God, were nevertheless historical facts easy of verification, it will not greatly surprise even those readers who are prejudiced in his favour to find, that, in his treatment of the original text of Holy Scripture—which most people are not able to verify—he did not scruple here and there to introduce ideas of his own. " What does it matter," so he said later in his blind conviction of being in the right, in reply to those who accused him of having altered the text, " so long as at bottom the thing is clear," so long as " it evidently is so," and " is demanded by the state of the case ? " " Not only is it right but even highly necessary that it should be set forth in the clearest and fullest manner," etc.[1]

It is chiefly in the question of justification by faith alone that he twists his text so much that his version ceases in reality to be a translation. He indeed speaks of his additions as " commentaries," but no one could thus have " commented " on the passages who was not, like Luther, entirely taken up with the new dogma of grace, justification and faith.

In his efforts to provide his doctrine with a firm foundation in the eyes of his readers, he added the word " only " in Rom. iv. 15 and Rom. iii. 20, thus making these Pauline texts into a condemnation of the Law : " The law worketh *only* wrath," " by the law *only* is the knowledge of sin."

Again, in Rom. iii. 25 f., the Apostle speaks of Christ " whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to the showing of his justice for the remission of former sins through the forbearance of God for the showing of his justice in this time, that he himself may be just and the justification of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ." Luther, however, in the interests of his new doctrine, makes him say that God had " set up Christ as a mercy seat through faith in his Blood, in order that he may present the righteousness which is acceptable to him, forgiving the sins which had remained till then under divine forbearance, that he might in his season offer the righteousness which is acceptable to him that he might himself alone be just and the justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus." The offering

[1] " Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," p. 642=117.

of the righteousness that is acceptable to God—an expression twice repeated—is not found in the original text, but of course is highly favourable to Luther's doctrine of a merely imputed righteousness.[1] In the same way he here speaks of God as "alone" being just, an interpolation of which the origin must also be sought in the translator's theology.[2]

Another passage falsely rendered is Rom. viii. 3: "He condemned sin in the flesh by sin," instead of "on account of sin" (the Son of God was sent) as the Greek text (*περὶ ἁμαρτίας*) plainly states.

The frequent substitution of the word "pious" for "just" would seem innocent enough, but this too was done purposely. Here a pet term of Luther's theology is made to replace the right word in order the better to represent holiness as something merely imputed. "To be pious," according to Luther, is to have faith, and, through faith, imputed justice.[3] Thus Noe becomes a "pious man without reproach" (Gen. vi. 9) instead of a "just and perfect man." Zachary and Elizabeth are described as "pious," but not as "just" before God (Luke i. 6), and similarly with Simeon (*ib.*, ii. 25), and Joseph, the husband of Mary (Mt. i. 19). Job, too, is not asked, as in the Sacred text: "What doth it profit God if thou be just?" but "What pleasure is it to the Almighty if thou makest thyself pious?" (Job xxii. 3). The exhortation in Apoc. xxii. 11: "He that is just let him be justified still," appears in the weakened form: "He that is pious let him be pious still."[4]

From his constant use of the word "congregation" instead of "Church" the latter conception unquestionably suffers. In Luther's translation the word church is used only of the heathen temples and illegal sanctuaries of the Israelites. He also terms the heathen priests and soothsayers "parsons," and unmistakably likens them and their practices to those of Catholicism. Baruch vi. 30, for instance, which describes the heathen priests is rendered as follows: "And the priests sit in their temples in

[1] Cp. Döllinger, "Reformation," 3, p. 142 f. Theodore Zahn the Protestant exegete says: "Luther by adding the words 'The righteousness which is acceptable to God' (here and iii. 21, x. 3; cp. iii. 22) exceeded the task of a translator by implying that the recognition of this righteousness by God is merely the consequence of its origin in God. 'A righteousness that comes from God,' as in Phil. iii. 9, would be less open to objection, though here again Luther goes beyond his text." "Brief des Paulus an die Römer," Leipzig, 1910, p. 82.

[2] De Lagarde (p. 358) rightly refers to Döllinger, *ib.*, pp. 140–144, where the latter quotes another passage which calls for revision: "The commandments are given *only* in order that man may be made aware of his inability to do what is good and thus learn to despair of himself."

[3] Döllinger, *ib.*, p. 144.

[4] Many other passages could be given where the sense is weakened owing to Luther's want of accuracy. For instance, John vi. 56: "My flesh is the true meat and my blood is the true drink," whereas Christ says: "My flesh is meat indeed (*ἀληθῶς*) and my blood is drink indeed."

their voluminous copes [!]; with shaven faces and wearing tonsures they sit there bareheaded and howl and cry aloud before their idols." "It is perfectly obvious at whom this is aimed," remarks a Protestant critic.[1]

The licence of the translator here is, however, of less importance than in his treatment of the passages on faith and justice, of which we shall give two further instances. These also show how Luther, even where he does not essentially alter the text, nevertheless succeeds in construing the words of Holy Scripture in such a way as to favour his own doctrine. When Paul's statements were obscure they should have been left in their obscurity, or, at any rate, they should not have been translated in such a way as to contradict the doctrine elsewhere taught by the Apostle.

And yet this is just what Luther does in Rom. x. 4. The passage according to the Greek runs: "For the aim of the law is Christ unto the justice of everyone that believeth," whereas Luther's version is: "For Christ is the end of the law, and whoever believeth in Him is just."

The same is the case with the oft-quoted text Rom. iii. 28, of which Luther's Bible makes a kind of palladium for the new teaching by the arbitrary addition of the word "alone." The text has been immortalised in its Lutheran shape even to our own day in inscriptions on Protestant churches and pulpits. There Luther makes the Apostle say: "Thus we hold that a man is justified by faith alone without the works of the law," whereas the old Latin of the Vulgate rightly rendered it: "*Arbitramur enim iustificari hominem per fidem sine operibus.*"

The word "alone" is not called for either by the text or the context. It is indeed true that the Apostle wishes to emphasise the exclusive action of faith, nevertheless, if we take this faith as he understands it, i.e. as a strong and vivifying faith and no mere dead thing, then it naturally comprises the works wrought by faith and man's co-operation under the influence of grace. Of this faith to which the Apostle expressly refers, for instance in Romans ii. 6 ff. and in Galatians v. 6, he might quite well have said in the above passage that it justifies without works, i.e. without such as are performed apart from faith and grace. In fact, taken in this sense, Luther's interpolation of the word "alone" is not reprehensible, though in the sense in which he intended it it is altogether inadmissible; for he would fain make the Apostle say, that faith "alone," without any works of the law, operates justification, the works being merely an aspect of faith. The addition of the word "alone" amounted to a quite unjustifiable usurpation of the famous Pauline dictum for the uses of his own party. It must also at least be termed a subjective falsification, even though, objectively, it be capable of a better interpretation. If, as we have heard Luther say, he really wished

[1] Riehm, "Luther als Bibelübersetzer," "Theol. Stud. u. Krit.," 57, 1884, p. 306; cp. p. 312 f. On the whole subject see Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), 14, p. 401 ff.

to show in his translation "the utmost fidelity and industry and had never a thought of deception," then he should not have made St. Paul say more than he does in the original, viz. that man is justified by faith without works.

Contemporary Catholic pens were not slow in assailing in the strongest terms Luther's translation on account of his surreptitious introduction of the word "alone." The translator also regarded the protest as of sufficient importance to warrant his devoting his leisure in the Coburg in September, 1530, to composing a reply. The tract in question, entitled "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," he sent to his friend Wenceslaus Link at Nuremberg instructing him to have it printed.[1]

In it he gives two reasons in vindication of his arbitrary action: He had been obliged in this instance to add the word "alone" in order first of all to render the Apostle's meaning in correct German, for it was the German usage to use the word "alone" or "only," when, of two things, people wanted to deny one and affirm the other, for instance, if one wished to say that a peasant had brought the wheat asked for but not the money, then he would not say "he has brought the wheat but not the money," but "he has brought no money but only corn."[2] Luther, however, was only able to show that this was in accordance with the spirit of the language in certain instances, not that it was necessary or indispensable in every case, particularly in the instance in question; still less could he prove that there were not circumstances affecting the words and the meaning where such a use of "alone" or "only" must be avoided in order not to change the tenor of the sentence. It might rightly have been urged against him that fidelity was far more important a matter than good phraseology.—The second reason he alleges in support of the interpolation bears directly on his erroneous view of the Apostle's doctrine: "I have not followed merely linguistic considerations, for the text and the meaning of St. Paul absolutely demand it." "He deliberately cuts away all works." "Whoever would speak bluntly and plainly of such a dismissal of works must say: faith alone," etc. If "this be so obvious," "why then not say so"?[3] Thus he makes the word "alone" a sort of hall-mark of his own "public" teaching.

He is determined to defy his opponents and to challenge them yet again. "And I repent me," he cries, "that I did not add thereto the word *all*, thus: without *all* works, *all* law whatsoever, so that it might be spoken out with a full, round sound. Thus therefore it shall remain in my New Testament, and though all Pope-asses should go raving mad they will not alter my decision."[4] —In a similar way and with redoubled energy he turns on those who had found fault with his translation of the Hail Mary

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 632 ff.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 103 ff.; the accompanying letter to Link dated Sept. 12, 1530, in "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 257.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 637; Erl. ed., 65, p. 110.

[3] P. 640 ff. = 115–117.

[4] P. 643 = 118 f.

because he had discarded "full of grace" in favour of "gracious." "The Papists are furious with me for having spoilt the Angelical Salutation, but, as a matter of fact, in good German I ought to have said, 'God greet thee, dear Mary.' I shall translate, not as *they*, but as *I* please!"[1]

The remarkable "Sendbrieff," other portions of which are of the highest psychological interest, must be regarded as in reality a product of the author's mental overstrain at that time. On the one hand he was on tenterhooks wondering what the fate of the new Evangel would be, threatened as it was by the Diet of Augsburg; on the other hand he was overmastered by the sight of his own achievements, particularly his much-belauded translation of the Bible. He was also profoundly exasperated by the translation of the New Testament published by Emser (see below, p. 519), the "Dresen [Dresden] Scribbler" as Luther called him,[2] and by the prohibition issued at Leipzig against the sale of his German Bible in the duchy of Saxony.

Hence he relieves his feelings in his usual way by an outburst of noisy vituperation: "All the Papists in a lump" are not "clever enough to understand or translate a single chapter of Scripture aright, no, not even the first two words." Their braying, their "he-haw, he-haw, is too weak to harm my translation. I know full well what art, industry, reason and common sense go to make a good translation, but, as for them, they understand this less even than the miller's beast."[3] It is quite true, so he says, that the four letters, *s o l a*, do not occur in Romans, "which letters these blockheads stare at as stupidly as a cow does at a new gate"; but, so he goes on, it is not our business to inquire "of the Latin letters how to speak German, as these donkeys do." "No Pope-ass or mule-ass, who has never even attempted it himself, shall I suffer to be my judge, or to find fault with me in this matter. Whoever does not want my version has simply to let it alone and . . . be rewarded with the devil's thanks."[3] "For the future I shall simply despise them and get others to do the same, so long as they remain such people, I beg your pardon, donkeys."[4]

In his efforts to express his contempt in the strongest words at his command we have the key to what he says in conclusion, which some of his opponents took too seriously. The famous "*Sic volo, sic iubeo*" with which his tract ends, though of course not meant in earnest, is nevertheless very characteristic of him.

"If," he writes, "your new Papist makes much ado about the word *sola*, just say straight out to him: Dr. Martin Luther *will* have it so and says Papist and donkey are one and the same thing. . . . *Sic volo, sic iubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.*" He too would boast for once and rail against the blockheads as St. Paul [!] had done against his crazy saints. Hence he parodies St. Paul's words and scoffs at the Papists who wished to make themselves out to be doctors, preachers, theologians and

[1] P. 638=112. [2] P. 634=106.
[3] P. 633=104 f. [4] Pp. 636, 639=108, 109, 113 f.

disputants, reiterating for each category the words "And so am I." He then goes further: "I am able to interpret the Psalms and the Prophets, which they cannot do. I can translate, which they can't. I can read Holy Scripture, they cannot. And to come to other matters: I am better acquainted with their dialectics and their philosophy than the whole lot of them together, and know for certain that not one of them understands his Aristotle. And if there is one among them who understands one introduction or chapter of Aristotle, then I am ready to be tossed in a blanket."[1]

The whole tract is one of the most extravagant examples of this stamp of polemical satire. It is hardly possible to determine where exactly the "great doctor" ceases and the satirical rhetorician begins.

In addition to the mistakes and the wilfulness of the translation, the character of the glosses appended by Luther, and still more his attitude towards the Canon of the Bible, laid his work open to objections of the most serious kind.

In the glosses on many passages he shows wonderful skill in manipulating the text in favour of his wrong views. This is carried so far that, to the account of the anointing of Our Lord's feet by the Magdalen (Mat. xxvi. 10), he adds the marginal gloss: "Thus one sees that faith alone makes the work good," because only faith could transform this seeming waste into a good work.[2] Of Mat. xvi. 18: "Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my church," he gives the following explanation, which plainly rests on his own partisan and anti-Papal standpoint: By Peter all Christians together with Peter are meant, and their confession is the rock. "All Christians are Peters on account of the confession which here Peter makes, which also is the rock on which Peter and all the other Peters are built. The confession is common to all; hence also the name."[3]

It was partly the defects of the translation itself, partly the cleverly calculated and thus all the more dangerous marginal glosses, which called forth objections and warnings from Catholic writers as soon as the work was published.

[1] P. 635=107. The passage was given verbally above, vol. iv., p. 345 f. The words of St. Paul which he plays upon occur in 2 Cor. xi. 18 ff.: "They are Hebrews, so am I; they are Israelites, so am I; they are the seed of Abraham, so am I."

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 64, p. 197. [3] *Ib.*, p. 194.

Hier. Emser complains that Luther "made Scripture to turn everywhere on faith and works, even when neither faith nor works are thought of." Emser speaks of more than 1400 passages which Luther had rendered in a false and heretical sense, though many of the passages he instances are not of any great importance.[1]

Johann Hasenberg, the Leipzig Professor, even went so far as to enumerate three thousand passages badly rendered in the German Bible.[2]

The theological faculty at Leipzig had declared as early as Jan. 6, 1523, that Luther had introduced his erroneous doctrines into the German Bible, a verdict on which Duke George took his stand when issuing his prohibition. Emser now set to work to carry out the Duke's further instructions, viz. that "he should revise anew the New Testament in accordance with the tenor and arrangement of the old, authentic text, and restore it and set it in order throughout."[3] His purpose was mainly to weed out the theological errors. His new edition of Luther's text was revised according to the Vulgate and provided with notes on the Greek. He also bought from Cranach the blocks for the illustrations (see below, p. 528), rejecting, however, such of the cuts as were too insulting, for instance, those in which the Papal tiara appears. The many excellencies of the language of Luther's version, and almost all the fruits of his labours, thus passed into Emser's edition, which appeared at Leipzig in 1527. Absence of copyright laws explains to some extent Emser's action. Emser's Bible, which was also made up to resemble Luther's folio volumes, bore no translator's name and was simply entitled: "Das Naw Testament nach Lawt der christlichen Kirchen bewertem Text corrigiert un wiederumb zurecht gebracht," and thus made no claim to being a new or original translation. As, however, Luther, the original translator, had been severely censured in Duke George's Introduction we can readily understand that he was much vexed at the revision of his work and accused the

[1] "Auss was Grund uund Ursach Luthers Dolmatschung über das Newe Testament dem gemeinen Man billich verbotten worden sey," Leipzig, 1523, Bl. 3.—In Bl. 2′ Emser, having instanced the formal theological decision, goes on to remark, that Luther declared the secular authorities had no right to forbid books concerning the faith, although he and his preachers were in the habit of teaching that all were subject to the secular power. "Thus the man can never handle a matter with moderation, but either goes too far or else not far enough"; the authorities had a perfect right to punish, in life and property, "those whom the Church publicly proclaimed to be heretics." He vainly urged the German bishops at the end of the book, "to summon one, or ten, learned, experienced and God-fearing men and to see that a trustworthy, reliable and uniform German Bible was made from the old and new [Lutheran] translation."

[2] Soffner, "Ein Lutherspiel aus alter Zeit," 1889, p. 16. Köstlin-Kawerau, I, p. 783. On Hasenberg see vol. iv., p. 173 f.

[3] G. Kawerau, "Hier. Emser" ("Schriften des Vereins f. RG.," No. 61), 1898, p. 65.

editor of plagiarism.[1] As Kawerau, however, remarks, "had he (Emser) laid claim to being an actual 'translator,' then his work would indeed have deserved to be styled a piece of plagiarism, as it has even down to our own day; but this he did not do, and merely wished to be regarded as the corrector of the Lutheran translation; hence this charge may be dismissed as unfair."[2] The second edition, however, which appeared after his death, bore Emser's name as the translator: "Das New Testament, so Emser säliger verdeutscht." This second edition was brought out by Augustine Alveld, as recent research has proved.[3] In it certain coarse expressions which Emser had borrowed from Luther's Bible were supplanted by more "seemly" words "for the sake of the maidens and the pure of heart," a circumstance which incidentally shows that even Luther's more moderate style of writing, as we find it in his Bible, was felt to be unusual and not always quite proper.

Johann Dietenberger, a Bible expert and contemporary of Luther's, wrote: Although Luther constantly appeals to Holy Scripture, yet there is no one who takes away from or adds to it more than he. "Of the Bible he rejects and adds what he pleases in order to establish his errors."[4] Dietenberger, a Mayence Dominican, published a complete translation of Holy Scripture in 1534, making considerable use for this purpose of Luther's German Bible. He says in his Preface, in explanation of this, that he had been urgently requested to "go through the recent German translation of the Bible (Luther's) and remove all that was not in accordance with the faith."[5]

Johann Eck, who undertook a new translation of the whole Bible (1537), acted more independently; but, however good as a critic of Luther's Bible, his own work met with but little success. His stilted German translation found but few readers.[6]

Even to the followers of the new faith Luther's translation gave offence owing to its want of fidelity. Bullinger, writing to Bucer on a certain question, remarks: "Luther admits that he has not been faithful in his translation of the Bible, in fact he is

[1] In the "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 634; Erl. ed., 65, p. 106 f. Luther's charge against Emser, the "Dresen Scribbler," in which he says: He "wrote his *name*, a preface and glosses to it and thus sold my New Testament under his own name," is not grounded on fact. Still more unjust and insulting to the deceased was the statement he made later to some of his friends: The miscreant "knew the truth better than he wrote it"; "he altered a word here and there against his conscience" in order to retain the favour of the Duke. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 79. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 149.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 72.

[3] L. Lemmens, O.F.M., "Aus ungedruckten Franziskanerbriefen des 16. Jahrh." ("RGl. Studien," ed. H. Greving, Hft. 20), 1911, p. 38.

[4] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), 14, p. 429 f.

[5] Janssen, *ib.* [6] *Ib.*

almost inclined to withdraw it."[1] J. L. Holler, who in 1654 wrote a pamphlet about his return from Protestantism to the Catholic Church, says that what moved him to take this step was his discovery of Luther's dishonest rendering. He gave a long list of passages where Luther's Bible departs from the true text.[2]

In his treatment of the Canon of the Bible Luther proceeds with his customary licence. Those books of the Bible in which he thought he found his own doctrines most clearly enunciated he speaks of in the Prefaces as "the best," viz. the Gospel and 1st Epistle of St. John, the Epistles of St. Paul, particularly those to the Romans, the Galatians and the Ephesians, and the 1st Epistle of Peter; the remaining books he arbitrarily ranks below these, and sometimes goes so far in depreciating them that their biblical character is jeopardised (below, p. 522, n. 6).

"The standard by which the greater or lesser value of each book is determined," says Adolf Hausrath, is the degree of clearness with which the doctrine of justification by faith is proclaimed. "Protestant Bible criticism had its originator in Luther, only that his successors shrank from persevering in his footsteps."[3]

Of 2 Machabees he had said even at the Leipzig Disputation that it did not belong to the Canon, simply because of the difficulty presented by the passage quoted by Eck concerning Purgatory which Luther denied. Of this book and the book of Esther, which also found no favour in his eyes, he said later in the Table-Talk, that "they were too much inclined to judaise and contained much heathen naughtiness." The so-called deuterocanonical books, though they are found in the Septuagint, were practically denied the status of inspired books by the very way in which he grouped them; in his translation they appear as a mere appendix to the rest of Scripture. According to the Preface, they were "not to be regarded as equal to the Bible, though good and profitable to read."

He denied that the Epistle to the Hebrews emanated from an Apostle; it was "a made-up Epistle," consisting of fragments amongst which, "mayhap, there is wood, hay and chaff."[4]

The Apocalypse he regarded as neither "apostolic nor prophetic."[5] "Let each one judge of it as he thinks fit; my spirit

[1] Dec. 28, 1534, in Lenz, "Briefwechsel Philipps von Hessen," 2, p. 224: "*Fatetur se parum syncere biblia vertisse et eam interpretationem tantum non revocat.*"

[2] A. Räss, "Die Konvertiten seit der Reformation," 7, p. 99 f., with the list.

[3] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 145 f.

[4] In the Preface of 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 153.

[5] Preface of 1522, "Werke," *ib.*, p. 169.

cannot find its way in the book."[1] In the Preface to the Epistle of Jude he is very unfair to this portion of Holy Scripture.[2] He regards it as merely an excerpt from the 2nd Epistle of Peter and says it was "an unnecessary missive and should be ranked below the main books [of the Bible]."[3] The words of approval he elsewhere bestows on these books do not avail to undo his criticism in this instance.

As regards his animosity to the Epistle of James; Luther questions its authenticity chiefly because, so he says, this Epistle, "in direct contrast to St. Paul and the rest of Scripture, attributes righteousness to works."[4] As further grounds for doubting its genuineness, he points out, that, though "it undertakes to teach Christian people, yet throughout its whole length it never once considers the sufferings, the resurrection and the spirit of Christ," further, it uses the language of the apostolic writings in such a way, "that it is plain that he [the author] lived long after St. Peter and St. Paul."[5]—On these grounds, at the close of his preface to the New Testament of 1522, he characterised it as an epistle of straw compared with the other canonical writings: "Hence the Epistle of James is nothing but an epistle of straw in comparison with them, for it has nothing evangelical about it."[6]—In 1515 and 1516, when he wrote his unprinted commentary on Romans, he had as yet no objection to raise against the canonical character of the Epistle of James. On the contrary he sought to combine the doctrine of this epistle on good works with that of St. Paul; he wrote: "When James and Paul say a man is justified by works, they are refuting the false views of those who imagine that faith suffices without its works."[7] But as early as the Leipzig Disputation in 1519 he expressed himself unfavourably concerning the Epistle of James. He repeats his condemnation in the commentary on Genesis and even goes so far as to remark bitterly, that James was mad (*delirat*) with his crazy doctrine of works;[8] in the same way, in the marginal notes to his private copy of the New Testament he says, in 1530

[1] Preface of 1545, *ib.*, p. 159. This preface replaced the former one, but, in it, he still leaves it "doubtful" whether the Apocalypse was to be taken as one of the books of the Bible or not.

[2] Zahn, "Einleitung in das N.T.,"[2] Leipzig, 1900, p. 84.

[3] Preface of 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 158.

[4] Preface of 1522, *ib.*, p. 156. [5] *Ib.*

[6] "Truly an Epistle of straw as compared with them" (the Gospel and 1st Epistle of John, the epistles of Paul, particularly to the Romans, Ephesians and Galatians, and the 1st Epistle of Peter). These were the "best" books of the New Testament because in them "faith in Christ" is "painted in a masterly manner." *Ib.*, 114 f.—The conclusion of the preface in question was omitted in Luther's own later editions but was often reintroduced later.

[7] M. Meinertz, "Luthers Kritik am Jakobusbriefe nach dem Zeugnis seiner Anhänger" ("Bibl. Zeitschr.," 3, 1905), p. 273 ff. Cp. the same author, "Der Jakobusbrief und sein Verfasser in Schrift und Überlieferung" ("Bibl. Studien"), 10, Hft. 1–3, 1905.

[8] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 5, p. 227, on Gen. xxii. Meinertz, "Luthers Kritik," etc., *ib.*

for instance, of James ii. 12 : " Oh what a chaos ! "[1] That he eventually altered his opinion, as has been asserted, cannot be proved merely from the circumstance that the later editions of his translation of the Bible do not contain the above words concerning the Epistle of straw. Although he occasionally expresses himself more favourably to this Epistle, still, against this, must be set other unfavourable utterances, nor did he ever retract his severe public condemnation.[2]

Even in his own day many who favoured the innovations spoke out against his condemnation of the Epistle of James. Carlstadt in his " *De canonicis scripturis* " objected in the strongest terms to the attacks on the Epistle, though he refrains from naming Luther. Luther's opinion at that time, viz. that Jerome might be the author, was characterised quite openly by Carlstadt as " a baseless supposition," and his proofs as " frivolous arguments by which he sought to discredit the Epistle of James."[3] Zwingli, Calvin and H. Bullinger also disclaimed Luther's views. " In the 17th and 18th centuries James stood in high favour with Protestants," and they even sought to exonerate Luther as best they could, sometimes on very strange grounds.[4] The following is the final judgment of a Protestant critic of modern times who had also vainly tried to excuse Luther's action : " It remains an act of injustice no less natural than regrettable."[5]

Says Carlstadt's biographer : " What lent Carlstadt a decided advantage in his polemics (against Luther's attitude towards the Epistle of James) was the utter inconsistency of Luther's critical attitude towards Holy Scripture at that time."[6] Luther " read his theology into the Bible," remarks another Protestant critic, " just as his mediæval predecessors had done with theirs."[7] " With a wondrous pertinacity he pitted his theology and his Christ against everything that did not accord with it, against Popery, against Tradition, yea, against the Bible itself."[8]

The halo of learning that had so long surrounded Luther's German Bible seemed to threaten to fade when, after long preparation, the revised edition was published at Halle in 1883 (and, with new emendations, in 1892). A commission of

[1] " Werke," Walchs ed., 9, p. 2774 ff. Cp. Walther, " Theol. Stud. u. Krit.," 66, 1, 1893, p. 595 ff. Meinertz, *ib.*

[2] Meinertz, *ib.*, p. 278.

[3] H. Barge, " Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt," 1, p. 197 f. Carlstadt himself was doubtful as to who was the author.

[4] Meinertz, *ib.*, p. 276.

[5] Zahn, " Einleitung in das N.T.,"[2] p. 84.

[6] Barge, *ib.*, p. 197 f.

[7] His mediæval predecessors, however, usually had behind them tradition and the authority of the Church.

[8] W. Köhler, " Theol. Literaturztng.," 1905, No. 16.

learned Protestant theologians "of various shades of opinion" was entrusted by the German-Evangelical Conference of Eisenach with the work. Out of too great respect for Luther the alterations made were, however, all too few; veneration for his memory explains why the translation was not raised to the present standard of learning. The result was that many Protestant congregations, more particularly in North Germany, looked askance at the new edition and it was not generally introduced.[1] A proposal was made, but to no purpose, that an exact counterpart of the Luther Bible of 1545 should be reproduced as a literary monument which would best serve to honour the author's memory. The severe objections which scholars have brought against the revised edition cause it to resemble already a ruin, which, having had the misfortune to date from a period when the demands made by learning were less insistent than to-day, now towers lonely and forsaken in our midst.

It is true that the revised Bible, with its heavy type showing exactly where it departs from the wording of the old Luther Bible, exhibits a huge number of freshly hewn stones built into the old, crumbling fabric. Nevertheless De Lagarde could say of the scholars who had taken part in the work:

"These theologians of acknowledged standing have given us a Bible in a language which is not our own, a Bible in which one seeks in vain for the indispensable emendations with which the revisers were familiar, a Bible the revisers of which have of set purpose ignored the labours of their most painstaking and self-sacrificing colleagues, a Bible which passes over in silence all the essential developments in theology and religion."[2]

"A language that is not ours," is also the main complaint of the Protestant theologian S. Oettli concerning this Bible; he also numbers among its failings its retention of certain old German words and of Luther's German rendering of the Divine names and the expressions Scheol, Hades, Daemon, etc. The principles which ruled the revision were "anything but unexceptionable," and the result of the work seemed "unsatisfactory." Oettli demonstrates the "backwardness" of the church Bible by comparing portions of the Bible taken from the revised text with exact translations of the same passages.[3]

[1] Nestle, Art. "Bibelübersetzungen, deutsche" in "RE. f. prot. Theol.,"[3] p. 73.

[2] In the article on the "revised" Luther Bible of 1883, in "Göttinger Gel. Anziegen," 1885, Hft. 2, reprinted in De Lagarde's "Mitteilungen," 3, 1889, 335 ff. Cp. above, p. 512.

[3] Oettli, "Die revidierte Lutherbibel," 1908.

All the surreptitious alterations and ambiguities we have alluded to above, for which Luther's theology was responsible, have been left untouched, save for the few exceptions already mentioned. And yet the introduction which tells the story of the revision and is printed at the beginning of the edition of 1883 admits, though with extreme caution, that, in places, Luther "had been led to put his own explanations into his translation of certain passages."[1] In spite of the admitted incorrectness of the renderings in question the revisers chose to be governed by the strange principle, that "texts to which the people have become attached under the form given them by Luther, owing to their use in the church and in works of piety, are, as far as possible, to be retained unchanged, or only to undergo slight alteration."[2] Owing to their laxity in this respect they were to hear from their co-religionists that, in the new Bible, they had "sacrificed their understanding" to Luther,[3] and again: "If the [Lutheran] Church after three and a half centuries, with the help of her best-esteemed theologians, can produce nothing better than this revision of her principal treasure, then sentence has already been passed on her. What can flourish in the Lutheran Church if the study of the Word of God does not?"[4]

We may add: How much better would not the results have been, and with what emulation would not the work have been undertaken had Protestant scholars been summoned to labour in unison to supply the members of their communion with a brand new translation, quite independent of Luther's, which should tally with the best present-day knowledge? In asking this question we are, of course, ignoring the inward difficulties presented by the difference of standpoint. In any case, however, the unprejudiced observer will see in the history of this revision and of similar attempts at revision made in the past, how heavily the burden of a single great name may weigh on whole generations.

A result of greater importance for the present subject is, however, that Luther's German Bible, in spite of all the pains taken by its author, falls far short of the ideal of scholarship and impartial fidelity. For these defects the real merits of its German garb cannot compensate.

Psychological Aspects of Luther's Work on the German Bible

In Protestant works on Luther written in a pious vein we often find him depicted as animated solely by the desire to enjoy the heavenly consolation of the holy Word of God and to make it known to his fellow Germans. In such works all his secondary, personal and polemical motives tend to

[1] P. lix. [2] *Ib.* [3] De Lagarde, art. quoted, p. 524, n. 2. [4] *Ib.*

disappear from view, and his guiding star during the three and twenty long years during which he was busy on the Bible seems to be nothing but the desire to satisfy the soul that craves for God and the glory of the Master.

Were this the case, then the task chosen was certainly of an eminently peaceful and religious character. Yet we find often enough in Luther allusions to purposes of a different kind to which too little attention is generally paid in Protestant literature of the sort we are referring to. Indeed the question arises whether, psychologically, the secondary aims are not to be regarded as quite as powerful as his supposed leading motive.

The tendencies which his statements betray are various ; first and foremost we have those of a polemical nature, also his desire to enhance his own personal position. As we are here dealing with the German Bible, which a recent writer has described as the " crown of Luther's creations," we are amply justified in looking into these psychological motives, the more so since they throw a new light on the alterations in the sacred text referred to above which Luther undertook in the interests of his theology.

The Bible, so he declares in his " Von den letzten Worten Davids " in 1543, could not be interpreted by Papists or Jews but only by those who " truly and rightly " possess Christ. Speaking from the standpoint of his own teaching he says : " Whoever does not really and truly hold, or wish to hold, this man Who is called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Whom we Christians preach, let him leave the Bible alone. . . . What else did the Pope lack ? Had they not the sure, bright and mighty word of the New Testament ? What else is wanting to our sects at the present time ? "[1] Since the Papists will not join those who had re-discovered the " mind of Christ "[2] and revealed it to humanity, let them keep their hands off the Bible. Another will interpret it for them.

But, even apart from the " mind of Christ," something else was wanting to the Papists which Luther could boast of possessing, viz. learning and a knowledge of the German language : " If I, Dr. Luther, could have felt sure," so he wrote in his " Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ " of 1530, " that all the Papists taken in a lump were sufficiently

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 37, p. 3. [2] *Ib.*, p. 5.

skilful to be able to translate even one chapter of the Bible into German faithfully and rightly I should in good sooth have been humble enough to beg their help and assistance in translating the New Testament into German. But because I knew and still see with my own eyes that not one of them knows how to translate or to speak German aright, I have not troubled about it."[1]

It was now his intention, as he declares at the beginning of his preface to the German New Testament, that the great work he had produced should make an end of the "old delusion" in which the whole world was sunk, viz. "that men do not really know what is the Law or the Gospel, or what the New or the Old Testament."[2] He is determined, so he tells us, by popularising his New Testament to show the people that the Gospel is not to be turned into a "code of laws or a handbook," as had "hitherto been the case and as certain earlier prefaces even by St. Jerome" had proposed. For the Gospel does not really require our works that we may become devout and thus be saved, nay, it condemns such works, but it does demand that we should believe that Christ has overcome sin, death and hell for us and therefore that He makes us pious, vivifies us and saves us, not by our own works but by His work, *i.e.* by His death and passion. "Hence it is, that, no Law is given to the believer whereby he may be justified before God."[3] It was his old antagonism to the importance of man's co-operation with grace and to good works that made him place at the head of both his German Testaments his motto against works, so indicative of his tendency. In the beginning of the preface to the first part of the Old Testament (1523) we read that Moses, in his 1st Book, taught that "it was not by the Law or by our own works that sin and death were to be vanquished," but only by the seed of the woman, that is Christ; "in order that faith may be exalted from the beginning of Scripture above all works, Law or merit. Thus the 1st Book of Moses contains hardly anything but examples of faith and unbelief, and of the fruits of faith and unbelief, and is thus almost an evangelical book."[4]

That the German Bible was intended as a bulwark of the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 633; Erl. ed., 65, p. 104.
[2] Preface of 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 108.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 112 f. [4] *Ib.*, p. 9.

Evangel was also plain from the illustrations. For the New Testament contained, as Duke George complained when interdicting it, "many disgraceful pictures, ridiculing and deriding His Holiness the Pope and fortifying his [Luther's] doctrines."[1] Emser, too, refers to these pictures in his protest: "How should Christians accept the work of one who has been openly branded as a heretic, a work which lacks the approbation of the church, and, moreover, insults and reviles the Pope in abusive figures, pictures, words and insinuations?"[2] Thus, for instance, in the woodcuts appended to the Apocalypse the scarlet woman of Babylon and likewise the dragon, the monster from the pit, both wear the papal tiara. In Apoc. xiv. Babylon is depicted as Rome, Sant' Angelo, St. Peter's, the Belvedere of the Pope's palace and Santa Maria Rotunda are all collapsing, whilst in chapter xviii. these same buildings are shown in flames.[3]

In Luther's Bible the Catholic rulers were directly attacked in the heading chosen in 1529 for the book of Wisdom: "The Wisdom of Solomon for the Tyrants." "The book should above all be read," he here says, "by the big Johnnies who rage against their subjects and against the guiltless on account of the Word of God"; for "in this book the tyrants are violently taken to task and scourged." "Hence this book is very much in place in our day."[4]

The introduction to Romans (1522) not only exposes at length the doctrine of faith alone, which Luther supposed Paul to have taught in this Epistle, but also warns all against the "verminous medley of men-made laws and ordinances under which the whole world groans." Rightly enough had Paul said of the makers of these laws, that their God is their belly.[5]

As we are here less concerned with the theological importance of Luther's German Bible than with the spirit which inspired its composition, we shall only remind the reader briefly, that the work of translation was intended as a solemn expression of the author's root ideas according to which the Bible was the only true source of faith. From

[1] Cp. Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 141.

[2] In the preface to the work "Auss was Grund," etc. Above, p. 519, n. 1. G. Kawerau, "Hier. Emser," p. 60.

[3] Kawerau, *ib.*, p. 66.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 95 f.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 137.

the Bible alone, so he taught, all must derive their faith and find the way of salvation under the direct inspiration of the spirit from on high; it ought to be in the hands of all, even of the unlearned. Hence, in his "To the German Nobility" of 1520, he had declared that the Bible, and particularly the Gospel, ought to be in the hands of everybody, even of the boys and girls.[1]

We find Luther, says Risch, regarding the Bible and its use from "a new standpoint diametrically opposed to the Catholic, and which found its ripest expression in his German Bible."[2]

O. Reichert likewise has it, that the "chief incentive to his translation of the Bible," was the determination in which his whole life's work centred, of unlocking for the German people by means of a thoroughly German translation, that book with the help of which "each one could live up to his faith and be assured of his salvation."[3]

"Only now," says Hausrath, speaking of the spread of Luther's Bible,[4] "could the burghers feel that they had attained to manhood in the matter of religion, and that the universal priesthood had become a reality. The head of each household had now the well-spring of all religious truth brought to his very door. To the Papists this seemed an abomination, as Cochlæus admits when he says, that every cobbler and old crony was poring over the New Testament as a source of all truth.[5] Even the populace took part in the controversies of the learned, having now begun to see that the faith concerned them too. For a while this could lead to strange excesses, as the theology of the New Prophets showed." Still, "the advent of the German Bible was the dawn of freedom."

Johann Fabri, who had recognised Luther's aims, was at one with Cochlæus and Emser in lending support to the prohibition issued against the German Bible. To Luther he said: "Your Testament works more harm than all the idolatrous books of Ephesus (Acts xix. 19), nay, than the hail in Egypt."[6] This was, as it were, his answer to the wish Luther had expressed to his friend Lang as early as Dec. 18, 1521: "Oh, that every little

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 461; Erl. ed., 21, p. 349.
[2] "N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1911, p. 123.
[3] "Luthers deutsche Bibel," p. 6.
[4] "Luthers Leben," 1, p. 136.
[5] "Comment. de actis et scriptis Lutheri," p. 55. Cochlæus laments in this passage the disputations which the common people entered upon with the clergy, and describes the universal Bible reading of the unlearned as one of the causes of the spread of the apostasy. Nor does he conceal the fact that some of the laity were able in controversy to quote Scripture with greater fluency than the Catholic priests and monks.
[6] "Christenliche Underrichtung Dr. Johann Fabri," etc., Dresden, 1528. Bl. Biij., Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 783.

town had its translator! Oh, that this book might be found on the lips of all, in their hands, before their eyes, and in their ears and hearts."[1]

A surprising psychological trait is the haughty self-satisfaction evinced by Luther with his grand achievement when objections were raised.

He had repeatedly proclaimed that he intended everything solely for the honour of God.[2] But woe to anyone who in any way attacked his own honour! For, by this work, Luther had vindicated his mission as the appointed preacher to the Germans; only at Wittenberg, where the Bible was taken really seriously, were people able to fathom the secrets of this sealed book.

"What is needed," he says in 1530, in his "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," speaking of the work of translation, "is a truly pious, faithful, God-fearing, Christian, learned, tried and experienced heart. Hence I hold that no false Christian or sectarian can translate faithfully."[3] Not only does he deem himself qualified for the task, but, as he declares in 1523, he knows nobody else who "can, within a twentieth part," do as well as he, though many find fault with his Bible. "I know that I am more learned than all the Universities, those sophists by the grace of God." True enough, "even if we all set to work with a will, we should still have enough to do to bring the Bible to light, one by means of his reason, another by his knowledge of languages." But all these critics, "who blame me here and there," "know that they themselves are unable to do it, yet they would fain make themselves out to be proficient in an art that is entirely foreign to them." To him their objections were but "the mud that clings to the wheels."[4]

Thanks to himself, he says, "the German language has now a better Bible than the Latin [the Vulgate]; in support of this I appeal to the reader."[5]

Of the superiority of his Bible over the Latin Vulgate in the matter of accuracy he had not the slightest doubt. "St. Jerome," he wrote in 1533, "and many others from among the masses, have made more mistakes in translating than we, both in the Latin and in the Greek."[6]—Should anyone attempt to translate the Psalms and refuse to be guided in his work by Luther's German Psalter, so he says in the same passage, "he would translate the Psalter in such a way that precious little would remain in it either of German or of Hebrew." "But a man who is unable to

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 256.
[2] Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 640; Erl. ed., 65, p. 114.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 640=115.
[4] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 63, p. 24 f. Preface to the Old Testament.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 25. [6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 37, p. 265.

do anything good himself likes to court praise and to appear an adept by abusing and crying down the good work of others."[1]

Of Emser he remarked, that he had admitted by his amended edition of the German Bible that, "my German is good and sweet; he saw plainly that he could not better it, and yet he wished to dishonour it, hence he took my Testament and copied it almost word for word." "I am glad to see even my very foes compelled to further my work."[2]

"If anyone will translate me 72 or 73 verses aright," he assures his friends, "I will give him 50 florins. But, for this, he must not make use of our translation."[3]—"Since the heathen Church has existed we have never had a Bible that could be read and understood so easily and readily as that which we have produced at Wittenberg, and, praise be to God, put into German."[4]

To irritate ("*irritare*") the Papists by his work, to rouse them to fury ("*furiam concitare*") and to let loose their "calumnious attacks" on his translation, was a real pleasure to him.[5] As in the case of the Papists, so also in that of rivals within his fold, his work for the Bible spelt their undoing. This it was which justified him against all opponents.

People like Osiander, he told his friends in 1540, single out one word of my translation "in order to find a ground for disagreeing with us. They dispute about a single word but they are after more. They should be compelled to translate the whole Bible and then we should see what they are able to do. And Amsdorf said: If I were the sovereign I should clap these wiseacres into cells and order them to translate Holy Scripture without making use of Luther's Bible. Then we should soon see what they could do."[6] "When we were at Marburg [at the religious Conference in 1529]," Luther once remarked, "Zwingli always spoke in Greek"; he declared he had studied the Greek Testament for thirteen years; "Oh, no, something more is needed than the mere reading of the Testament, but these people

[1] *Ib.*, p. 265 f.

[2] "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ," "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 634 f.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 106 f.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 213.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 4, Table-Talk.

[5] To Nic. Hausmann, Jan. 21, 1531, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 349: "*Recudimus iam psalterium germanicum pro calumniatoribus irritandis.*" Cp. to the same, Feb. 25, 1530, *ib.*, 7, p. 232, on the fresh edition of the New Testament then undertaken with Melanchthon: "*Novam furiam concitaturi contra nos apud papistas,*" and to Wenceslaus Link, Jan. 15, 1531, *ib.*, 8, p. 345: "*Dabimus operam . . . ut (David) purius Germanum sonet, multam occasionem calumniatoribus dantes, ut habeant, quo in translationem nostram suam rabidam invidiam exerceant et acuant, nec tamen exsaturent.*"

[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 121.

are blinded by ambition"; that was why Zwingli had used Greek and Hebrew when preaching at Marburg.[1] Carlstadt, too, was always making a display of his Greek and Hebrew,[2] but all of them were only able to "pick holes in the Scriptures" which Luther had translated.[3]

He was determined that nobody should be allowed to interfere in his Bible and protests in his own way against any alterations. He wrote in 1539: "I beg all my friends, foes, masters, printers and readers to look upon this New Testament as my own; if they have any fault to find with it, then let them make a new one for themselves. I know full well what I am about, and I can also see what others are able to do. But this Testament is to be Luther's own German Testament! For of criticism and cavilling there is now no end."[4]

Which of his rivals had ever had to contend with "temptations" when engaged on the Bible? He, however, had to thank his "combats" for having been his instructors.[5] Münster, so Luther said in 1536, accused him of making certain mistakes in his translation of the book of Jonas. "Yes, dear Münster, you have never been through these temptations. I, like Jonas, have looked into the belly of the whale where all seemed given over to despair."[6] "The pious are like unto Jonas; they are cast into the sea of despair, nay, into hell itself."[7]

Discontent and vexation—temptations of another kind—frequently overwhelmed him whilst engaged on his Bible. Even his unprecedented success did not satisfy him; the Bible did not seem to him to be selling quick enough, nor to be made use of to the extent he wished; again, he feared, that in the future, it would lose its interest.

"I fear," he said in Nov., 1540, "that the Bible will not be much read, for people are very weary of it and no one reprints it now."[8] His views regarding the future were even more gloomy: "When I die there will not be a curate, teacher or sacristan who will not set to work to render the Bible on his own. Our version will no longer be valued. All our works will be thrown aside, yea, even the Bible and the Postils, for the world ever yearns for something new."[9]—"I am sick of Holy Scripture; see that you

[1] *Ib.*, p. 121 f. [2] *Ib.*, p. 175.
[3] Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 69 f.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 19.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 115.
[5] Cp. Preface of 1539, "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 405.
[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 384.
[7] Do. "Aufzeichn.," p. 291.
[8] Do., "Tischreden," p. 240. Cp. "Aufzeichn.," p. 82.
[9] Do., "Tischreden," p. 273.

make a good use of it after my death. It has cost us enough toil yet is but little regarded by our own people."[1] "So profitable is the German Bible that no one knows how to esteem it high enough; no one sees what knowledge it has unlocked to the world. What formerly we sought with much trouble and constant study and even then were unable to find, is now offered to us in the plainest language; though we looked for it in vain in the obscurity of the olden version."[2]—He does not tell us whether it is the Vulgate or the mediæval German Bible which he here refers to as so obscure in comparison with his own Bible.

What appears to have afforded him most satisfaction was that he had been able to counteract the false translations and commentaries of the Jews. Often does he mention this as one of the advantages of his Bible, and it is perfectly true that his felicitous and correct exposition particularly of the Messianic predictions based on the Hebrew text is deserving of all praise.

He pointed out incidentally to his friends, that, in his Bible, he had "protested very strongly against the Rabbis,"[3] and, in his "On the Last Words of David," he congratulated himself when comparing his own interpretation with that of the Jews: "The Jews, because they do not accept Christ, cannot know or understand what is said by Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. . . . Scripture must seem to them as an epistle does to a man who cannot read." "Unless we devote our energies to bringing the Hebrew Bible, wherever this is possible, into touch with the New Testament in a sense contrary to the Rabbinists, then it would be better to keep to the old version [the Vulgate] which, after all, is the best."[4]—His statement here, provided of course that the proviso "wherever this is possible," be rigidly observed, is not altogether devoid of truth.

In spite of this, however, his conscience often told him that his acquaintance with Hebrew was not equal to that of the Jewish commentators. He admitted even in later years that he was no "grammatical or regular Hebraist."[5] "His familiarity with the language of the Old Testament was due, for the most part, as he himself says, to his constant reading of it and to his comparing together the different passages in order to arrive at their true meaning."[6]

Julius Köstlin, Luther's best-known biographer, from whom the words just quoted are taken, declares, that, in his translation of the Bible, Luther "bestowed on his German

[1] Do., "Aufzeichn.," p. 251.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 281.
[3] Do., "Tischreden," p. 145, 1540.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 37, p. 4.
[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 569.
[6] *Ib.*

people the greatest possible gift"; Luther wished to make of the Book of Books "an heirloom of the whole German nation."[1] Similar enthusiastic allusions to "the gift to the nation" are often met with in Protestant writers. They, however, overlook the fact that it was only to a fraction of the German nation, viz. to his co-religionists, that Luther offered this gift; moreover, they seem forgetful of a remark once made by Luther to a very intimate friend, which is far from enthusiastic and anything but complimentary to his German fellow-countrymen. The remark in question occurs in a letter of Luther's dated Feb. 4, 1527, and addressed to Johann Lang of Erfurt; evidently he was extremely annoyed at the time. It runs as follows: "I am busy with Zacharias [the translation of which was then in the press] and have begun the translation of the Prophets, a work that is quite in keeping with the gratitude I have hitherto met with from this heathenish, nay, utterly bestial nation."[2] Even so severe a stricture must not be lost to sight by the historian desirous of tracing a psychological picture of the author's feelings at the time he was engaged on the translation.

Finally it is instructive from the psychological standpoint to trace the development in Luther's mind of the fable—to be dealt with more fully below—that, under Popery, the Bible had been discarded and that he, Luther, had brought it once more to light.[3]

To begin with, he merely claimed to have discovered the true meaning of Scripture on the controversial points he himself had raised.[4] It was the more easy for him to attribute to his Catholic contemporaries ignorance of the Bible, seeing that in those years the exegetical side of sacred learning had been to some extent neglected in favour of the discussions of the schoolmen. When afterwards he had been dazed by his great success with his translation of the Bible he was led to fancy that he was the first to open up the domain of Holy Scripture. This impression is closely bound up with the arbitrary pronouncements, even on the weightiest questions of the Canon, which we find scattered throughout his prefaces to the books of the Bible. He frequently repeats that he had forced all his opponents to take up the study of the Bible and that it was he alone who had made them see the

[1] *Ib.*

[2] "*Dignissimum opus gratitudine, qua me hactenus excepit barbara hæc et vere bestialis natio.*"

[3] See the next section.

[4] See below, p. 541, his statement against Emser.

need of their devoting themselves to this branch of learning—so as to be able to refute him. Here of course he is exaggerating the facts of the case. Accustomed as he was to hyperbole, we soon find him declaring, first as a paradox and then as actual fact, that the Bible had been buried in oblivion among the Catholics. The Papal Antichrist had destroyed all reverence for the Bible and all understanding of it; only that all men without exception might not run headlong to spiritual destruction had Christ, as it were by "force," preserved the "simple text of the Gospel on the lecterns" "even under the rule of Antichrist."[1]

Luther utterly discarded the principles of antiquity concerning the Bible, but nevertheless he made abundant use in his translation of the literary assistance afforded him by the Catholic past.

In the Old Testament, the Church's Latin translation, viz. the Vulgate, and the Greek Septuagint were of great service to him, but he also made use of the Latin translation of Santes Pagninus (not to speak of that of the Protestant, Seb. Münster) and likewise of the Commentaries, as, for instance, of the "*Glossa ordinaria*" and the works of Nicholas of Lyra († 1340).

An unkindly saying current at a later date in Catholic circles concerning Lyra's widely-known Bible Postils declared: "*Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset.*" The saying is, however, met with under another form even before Luther's day, and in this older guise serves to show the high esteem in which Lyra's Commentary was held; here it runs: "*Nisi Lyra lyrasset, nemo doctorum in bibliam saltasset.*"[2] Not only Lyra but many other Bible commentators stood in high favour among Catholic scholars at the close of the Middle Ages, nor was there before Luther's day any such absence of respect for the Bible or ignorance of its contents, whether in the original text or in German translations as he would have us believe.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 645; Erl. ed., 65, p. 122, "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ."

[2] The saying appears in this shape in Reisch's "Margarita philosophica," Argentorati, 1508. See Nestle, "Jahrb. f. deut. Theol.," 1877, p. 668. In fact it is there described as a common "*proverbium inter theologos.*" Another later form ran: "*Si Lyra non lyrasset, totus mundus delyrasset.*"

The Bible in the Ages before Luther

It would be to perpetuate a prejudice all too long current among Protestants, founded on Luther's often false or at least exaggerated statements, were one to fail to recognise how widely the Bible was known even before Luther's day and to what an extent it was studied among educated people. Modern research, not seldom carried out by open-minded Protestants, has furnished some surprising results in this respect, so that one of the most recent and diligent of the Protestant workers in this field could write : " If everything be taken into account it will no longer be possible to say as the old polemics did, that the Bible was a sealed book to both theologians and laity. The more we study the Middle Ages, the more does this fable tend to dissolve into thin air." " The Middle Ages concerned themselves with Bible translation much more than was formerly supposed."[1]

According to a careful summary recently published by Franz Falk no less than 156 different Latin editions of the Bible were printed in the period between the discovery of the art of printing and the year of Luther's excommunication, i.e. from 1450 to 1520. To this must also be added at that time many translations of the whole Bible, many of them emanating from what was to be the home of the innovations, viz. 17 German, 11 Italian, 10 French, 2 Bohemian, 1 Belgian, 1 Limousine and 1 Russian edition, making in all, with the 6 Hebrew editions also known, 199 editions of the complete Bible. Of the German editions 14 are in the dialect of Upper Germany.[2]

Besides this the common people also possessed extracts of the Sacred Book, the purchase of the entire Bible being beyond their slender means. The Psalter and the Postils were widely known and both played a great part in the religious life of the Middle Ages. The Psalter, or German translation of the 150 Psalms, was used as a manual of instruction and a prayer-book for both clergy and laity. Twenty-two translations dating from the Middle Ages are extant, and the latter editions extend from the 'seventies of the 15th to the 'twenties of the 16th century. The Postils was the collection of lessons from both Old and New Testaments, prescribed to be read on the Sundays. This collection sufficed for the people and provided them with useful reading matter, with which, moreover, they were rendered even

[1] Kropatscheck, " Das Schriftprinzip der lutherischen Kirche," 1, 1904, p. 163.—On the German translations see below, p. 542 ff.

[2] F. Falk, " Die Bibel am Ausgange des MA. ihre Kenntnis und ihre Verbreitung," Cologne, 1905, pp. 24, 91 ff.

more familiar owing to the homilies on these very excerpts usually given on the Sundays. The early printers soon helped to spread this form of literature. We still have no fewer than 103 printed German editions of the Postils (often known as Plenaries) dating from the above period.[1]

Of the importance of the Plenaries Risch remarks very aptly : " In them the ideal of a popular exposition and translation of the Bible before Luther's day finds its first actual expression. That these Plenaries—it would be interesting to know which kind—were the first incentive to Luther's popular works of piety, and, at times, thanks to his good memory, supplied him with a ready-made German translation of the Bible, appears to me beyond question." " Thanks to these Gospel-Books, as they were frequently called, a kind of German ' Vulgate ' covering certain portions of the Sacred text may have grown up even before Luther's day."[2] " Even a superficial glance at the Middle Ages," says Risch, " cannot fail to show us the gradual upgrowth of a fixed German Biblical vocabulary. Luther here could dip into a rich treasure-house and select the best. . . . In laying such stress on Luther's indebtedness to the past we have no wish to call into question the real originality of his translation."[3]

" That, during the Middle Ages," says another Protestant scholar, " more particularly in the years which immediately preceded Luther's appearance, the Bible was a well-spring completely choked up, and the entrance to which was jealously guarded, used to be, and probably still is, the prevailing opinion. The question is, however, whether this opinion is correct." " We have before us to-day so complete a history of the Bible in the various modern languages that it can no longer be said that the Vulgate alone was in use and that the laity consequently were ignorant of Scripture. It greatly redounds to the credit of Protestant theologians, that they, more than any others, took so large a part in collecting this enormous store of material." " We must admit that the Middle Ages possessed a quite surprising and extremely praiseworthy knowledge of the Bible, such as might in many respects put our own age to shame." " We have to acknowledge that the Bible at the present day no longer forms the foundation of our knowledge and civilisation to the same extent as it did in the Middle Ages."[4]

Who, however, was responsible for the prevalent belief that the Middle Ages knew nothing of the Bible ? Who was it who so repeatedly asserted this, that he misled the people into believing that nobody before him had studied Holy Scripture, and that it was only through him that the " Word of God had been drawn forth from under the bench " ? A Protestant quite rightly

[1] Falk, *ib.*, p. 27 ff.

[2] Cp. Moureck, " SB. der kgl. Böhm. Gesellschaft d. Wissensch., Phil. Kl.," 1892, p. 176 ff.

[3] " N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1911, p. 141.

[4] E. v. Dobschütz, " Deutsche Rundschau," 101, 1900, p. 61 ff. Falk, *ib.*, p. 86.

reproves the "bad habit" of accepting the estimate of ecclesiastical conditions, particularly of divine worship, current "with Luther and in his circle";[1] it is, however, to fall short of the mark, to describe merely as a "bad habit" Luther's flagrant and insulting falsehoods against the ecclesiastical conditions at the close of the Middle Ages, falsehoods for which his own polemical interests were solely responsible.

The psychology of Luther's gradual approach to the statement that the Bible before his day lay under the bench, has already been described (p. 534 f.). As some Protestants have sought to clear him of the authorship of so glaring a fable and to insinuate that the expression belongs rather to his pupil Mathesius, we must here look a little more closely into the words.

Luther himself uses the saying, for instance, when claiming credit in his Commentary on the Prophet Zacharias (chap. viii.) with having rendered the greatest possible service to Scripture. He says: "They [the Papists] are still angry and refuse to listen when people say, that, with them, Scripture lay under the bench, and that their mad delusions alone prevailed." In this connection the Weimar editor of the Commentary refers to a work of the former Dominican, Petrus Sylvius, aimed at Luther and entitled "Von den vier Evangelein, so eine lange Zeit unter der Bank sein gelegen."[2]—Popery, Luther says in another passage, "kicked Scripture under the bench."[3] He speaks repeatedly in the Table-Talk[4] of the "Bible under the bench," which, since "it lay forgotten in the dust," he had been obliged to drag again into the light of day.[5]

Elsewhere he describes in detail the trouble he had in pulling the Bible from "under the bench," particularly owing to his theological rivals and the sectarians within the camp; on this occasion his black outlook as to the future of the Bible he had thus set free scarcely redounds to the credit of his achievement. He says in his tract against Zwingli ("That the words of Christ, 'This is My Body,' still stand fast," 1527): "When in our own day we saw

[1] E. Schröder, "Gött. Gel. Anzeigen," 1888, p. 253.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 606; Erl. ed., 42, p. 280. Cp. N. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner im Kampf gegen Luther," p. 61.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25, p. 444.

[4] *Ib.*, 63, pp. 401, 402.

[5] Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 270; "*Annis* 30 *ante biblia erant incognita, prophetæ innominati*," etc.

how Scripture lay under the bench, and how the devil was deluding us and taking us captive with the hay and straw of men-made prayers, we tried, by the Grace of God, to mend matters, and have indeed with great and bitter pains brought Scripture back to light once more, and, sending human ordinances to the winds, set ourselves free and escaped from the devil." But then, so he goes on, others [on his own side] fell upon him, raised up an uproar and raged against him; Zwingli, in particular, had riddled a single line of Scripture "with ten holes," "so that I have never read of a more disgraceful heresy"; which, even in the beginning, "comprised as many factions and divisions as it had heads." There would, however, in future "be such a turmoil in Scripture, such dissensions and so many factions, that we might well say with St. Paul 'the mystery of ungodliness is already at work'" (2 Thess. ii. 7). "He [the devil] will bring about factions and dissensions in Scripture so that you will not know what is Scripture, or faith, or Christ, or even where you stand."[1]

Words of Luther's such as these, which we meet with repeatedly under various shapes, point indirectly to the reason why the Church preferred to see, in the hands of people unversed in theology, only those extracts from Holy Scripture approved by herself, in particular the Postils and Plenaries; for the dangers of misunderstanding and disagreement were very real, especially in an age so prone to sectarianism.

"To put into the people's hands the complete Bible," says Franz Falk bluntly enough, "was to give them something both dangerous and superfluous. The Postils were amply sufficient for the Christian people. Even in Protestant circles to-day people are deciding in favour of an expurgated Bible for use in the school and the home."[2] W. Walther in his "Deutsche Bibelübersetzungen des Mittelalters" gives a favourable account of the Catholic practice: "According to what we have stated the attitude of the mediæval Church to the German Bible appears to have been quite definite. Janssen seems perfectly right when he says, 'The Church opposed no resistance to its spread so long as strifes and divisions within her own body brought no pet abuses to light.'"[3] "Men of insight," continues Janssen,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 69; Erl. ed., 30, p. 19. For similar predictions see above, p. 169 ff. On the famous "bench" cp. also Weim. ed., 6, p. 460; Erl. ed., 21, p. 348; also below, p. 541 and vol. iv., p. 159.

[2] "Die Bibel am Ausgange des MA.," p. 32.

[3] Walther, p. 742. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), 2, p. 303. Walther also observes: "Thus it was not from the

"such as Geiler von Kaysersberg and Sebastian Brant doubted from the beginning the advisability of putting the entire Scriptures in the hands of the people. They feared, and rightly feared, that the Bible would be grossly and wilfully perverted by the ignorant and the light-minded, and be made to uphold all sorts of doctrinal and moral teaching. God Himself had not placed His Divine Word indiscriminately in the hands of all, for He had not made the reading of it a condition of salvation. All errors had sprung out of false interpretation of Holy Scripture. Even to learned commentators the Scriptures presented difficulties enough, how much more to the ignorant masses ?"

No one to whom it might prove of use was debarred access to the complete German translation or to the Sacred Text in the original languages ; in their case restrictions were waived. The large number of complete editions would in fact be inexplicable except on the assumption of a certain freedom in this respect. Numerous instances might also be cited where educated people during the Middle Ages made use of the complete Bible.[1]

Sebastian Brant says in the "Narrenschiff" : "Every country is now filled with Holy Scripture." "The rapidity with which the different editions followed each other," wrote Janssen,[2] "and the testimony of contemporary writers point to a wide distribution of German Bibles among the people."

As regards other countries, too, there is no lack of sufficient data for arriving at a like conclusion, viz. that the Bible was already widely disseminated before the religious revulsion came. We may instance the recent works of A. C. Paues and A. Gasquet on England and those of the Dominican Mandonnet on his own Order's relations with the Bible during the Middle Ages, from which we may see how familiar the Bible must have been in certain circles.[3]

The honest admission made by a Protestant, viz. "that, so far as outward acquaintance with the Bible went, it would be untrue to say that it lay under the bench before the Reformation,"[4] does not, however, sufficiently counter

Church that the translations emanated ; it was not the Church that recommended the study of the Bible to the laity. This would indeed have been contrary to her principles. But neither did the Church show herself hostile at the outset to every translation. So long as it contained nothing to promote 'divisions' or to undermine reverence for the Church and her doctrines she permitted this movement, as she did every other that did not infringe her authority." *Ib.*

[1] Cp. Franz Falk, *ib.*, pp. 33–66.

[2] Janssen, *ib.*, 1, p. 60.

[3] Paues, "A Fourteenth Century Biblical Version," Cambridge, 1902. Gasquet, "The Eve of the Reformation," 1900, and in the "Dublin Review," 1894. Cp. "Stimmen aus Maria Laach," 66, 1904, p. 349 ff.—Mandonnet, "Dict. de la Bible," 2, Art. Dominicains. Cp. "Katholik," 1902, 2, p. 289 ff.

[4] W. Köhler, "Katholizismus und Reformation," p. 13.

what Luther says, for his grievance in reality was, that, among the Papists, it was rather the true meaning of the Bible that "lay under the bench."

It is plain that they "abuse and revile Scripture, thrust it under the bench, pretend that it is shrouded in thick fog, that the interpretation of the Fathers is needed and that light must be sought in the darkness." Thus did he write against Emser in 1521.[1] A recent champion of Luther has also thought it worth while to write: "The Bible before Luther's day was not regarded as in Luther's opinion it should have been regarded, or treated as it should have been treated; it was indeed studied by the learned but only in the same way as people studied Augustine, Jerome and Thomas Aquinas—and, moreover, not with the same zeal or to the same extent."

Did one wish to deal adequately with the standing thus taken up by Luther and his defenders there would be a whole book to be written full of interesting facts; for what Luther presupposes in such repeated statements is that his theology was right and that of the Church all wrong. Sufficient light has, however, already been thrown in this work on the value of this assertion of Luther's.

Denifle, who, thanks to his expert acquaintance with the material, was able to examine so many of Luther's theological assertions concerning the Middle Ages, deals amongst other things with the question, whether Luther was really the first to advance the theory, "that Christ is the whole content of Scripture,"[2] the enunciation of which had been claimed as "the greatest service rendered by Luther to the Church and to theology."—The truth is, however, that the Church of old was so full of the idea that the "Holy Scriptures before Christ were written only to proclaim Him and His Church," that it was an easy task for Denifle to overwhelm his adversaries beneath a mass of quotations, for instance, from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and J. Perez of Valencia (the latter representing Luther's older contemporaries).

Catholics have rightly gone even further, and asked whether it was not Luther himself, who, by his arbitrary treatment of some parts of Scripture, and its actual words,—to say nothing of its interpretation—thrust the Bible under the bench? Surely, his destruction of the Canon of Scripture, his alterations in the text and the liberty he arrogated to himself in his glosses[3] are

[1] "Auff das ubirchristlich Buch," etc., 1521, "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 641; Erl. ed., 27, p. 247.

[2] "Luther und Luthertum," 1[1], p. 376 ff.

[3] Cochlæus wrote ("Commentarius de actis et scriptis Lutheri," p. 54): "*Quis satis enarrare queat, quantus dissidiorum turbationumque et ruinarum fomes et occasio fuerit ea novi Testamenti translatio. In qua vir iurgiorum data opera contra veterem et probatam ecclesiæ lectionem multa immutavit, multa decerpsit, multa addidit et in alium sensum detorsit, multas adiecit in marginibus passim glossas erroneas atque*

but little calculated to qualify him to be called the saviour and liberator of the Bible.—It is nothing more than an appeal to the imagination of the populace, when, in connection with this, popular works on Luther refer to the Bible, which the youthful Luther when still a student in the world, found chained in the library at Erfurt (though this itself is a matter of history). To hear of the Bible having been "bound in chains before Luther's day" may sound very dreadful, but, as all should know, the only reason why valuable books were chained in those days was to guarantee their preservation for the use of the reader. Scholars are well aware that the printed works which were then so costly, and still more the manuscripts, were usually kept chained in the libraries in order to prevent visitors carrying them off; the custom still obtains in Rome to-day in the parlours of some of the convents, where books are displayed for the perusal of those waiting. Wattenbach in his "Schriftwesen des Mittelalters"[1] enumerates a whole series of instances from earlier centuries. One of the most remarkable which goes back to about Luther's day, is that of the Medicean library of manuscripts, the so-called Laurentiana at Florence, where, even to-day, the valuable MSS. in their splendid book-cases are fastened by chains and have to be unlocked when called for for use in the Reading-Room. In his catalogue of the Greek Codices in the Laurentiana Bandini gives an interesting sketch of these curious bookcases. Even under the Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony, in 1535, in Luther's own time, the books belonging to the Princely Library at Wittenberg were chained.[2] On the other hand, the copy of Holy Scripture which Luther was given during his student years at the Erfurt monastery, and the diligent study of which was enjoined upon him both by the rule of his Order and the words of his Superior, was evidently not thus chained.

Finally as regards the German translations of the Bible before Luther's day. Of the seventeen printed editions of the whole Bible referred to above (p. 536) as dating from the years 1450–1520, the oldest is the so-called Mendel edition of Strasburg, probably dating from 1466,[3] in which year the copy was purchased which now lies in the Munich State Library. The German Plenaries commence with the year 1470. We hear, for instance, of a printed German

cavillosas, et in præfationibus nihil malignitatis omisit, ut in partes suas traheret lectorem." He concludes by saying that many persons had collected more than a thousand errors in the translation.

[1] Second ed., 1875, p. 529.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 659 (N. 3, p. 282).

[3] Franz Falk, "Die Bibel am Ausgange des MA.," p. 90. Earlier than this we find five Latin Bibles printed at Mayence, Strasburg, and, perhaps, Bamberg.

Bible being bought for nine florins.[1] The lower price of the Plenaries, on the other hand, made them easier to obtain. Thus according to the data collected by Franz Falk, Johann Schöffer, a printer, in 1510, sent from Mayence to the Easter fair at Leipzig, amongst other books, seventy-three German Postils (Plenaries), priced at five copies a florin. In the following year Schöffer's agent had to render an account after the Michaelmas fair for the sale of seventy-two postils.[2] The German postils in those days served much the same purpose as Goffine does to-day.

Besides the printed editions, the manuscript translations still preserved must also be taken into account. Some twenty years ago Wilhelm Walther, the Protestant theologian, devoted a study to this particular branch of research.[3] The results he then arrived at have since been amplified and corrected by Franz Jostes and others, and still await further additions. Walther examined 202 MSS. German Bibles, or portions of Bibles, and came to the conclusion that they represented no less than thirty-four various forms of translation. They have indeed much in common, though they differ slightly according to the dialect of the locality they hail from, or the alterations made by their writers. The translations are, in every case, made on the Latin Vulgate.

Yet all the printed German Bibles dating from before Luther's time resemble each other so much in the translation that we can, in reality, speak only of one German Bible. They all sprang originally from a single MS. translation and practically constitute a sort of German vulgate. The type was not, however, of Waldensian origin, as some formerly thought owing to the fact that the Tepler Bible, which had been placed first on the list, shows traces of that heresy. The earliest German translation is, on the contrary, as orthodox as the printed editions. This is probably the fragmentary Bible translated by Master Johann Rellach. It seems to be older than the Tepler Bible, and the first Mendel edition and all the others might well go back to it. Franz Jostes was the first to suppose that "the pre-Lutheran printed version of the Bible is the work of Master Johann

[1] Falk, "Die Druckkunst im Dienste der Kirche," 1879, pp. 29 and 80. Do., "Die Bibel," etc., pp. 32, 61. [2] *Ib.*, p. 33.
[3] "Die deutsche Bibelübersetzung des MA.," 1889–92.

Rellach."[1] The translator was, so he opines, a Dominican belonging to a convent in the diocese of Constance. He happened to be in Rome in 1450, the Jubilee year, and, hearing from Bishop Leonard of Chios of the destruction of the magnificent library at Constantinople he and his brethren were led to vow to make good this loss to the best of their ability by translating the Bible into German. They doubtless made use of even older translations in their work.

As for the slight difference shown in the seventeen printed editions of this translation still extant, they are easily explained. The printers, out of consideration for their readers, were pretty free in introducing dialect forms.

If we glance at the language, we shall find here some good points, but as the original manuscripts of which Johann Rellach made use were not all equally good, the same holds of all the printed translations. Of the different varieties which never appeared in print at all, Walther praises some on account of their excellent German, for instance, the one he places second on his list, and which may date from the second half of the 14th century. As a whole, however, particularly in the printed translation, the language suffers from a too slavish adherence to the style of the Latin text. A more exact classification, according to the excellence of the language, is, however, impossible until the whole field has been explored by our German philologists.[2]

Owing to the matter not having yet been sufficiently investigated, we cannot determine accurately what influence the earlier translations had on the German Bible published by Luther. Luther himself says never a word of having used them.

It would, however, be just as bad to say, on the one hand, that Luther made no use whatever of the older version and had not even a copy of it to refer to in the Wartburg during

[1] "Die Waldenserbibeln und Meister Johannes Rellach" ("Hist. Jahrb.," 1894, p. 771 ff.), p. 792. On the other side see W. Walther in the "N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1896, Hft. 3, p. 194 ff. Cp. also Nestle in the "RE. f. prot. Theol.,"[3] Art. "Bibelübersetzungen, deutsche," and the work of R. Schellhorn there mentioned.

[2] G. Grupp gave a critical account of the results of Walther's researches in the "Hist.-pol. Blätter," 115, 1895, p. 931, which amongst other things considerably raises Walther's estimate of the number of manuscript and printed copies.

his work on the New Testament or, on the other, as some have done, that Luther stole the best part of his work from earlier German translators.

When he wrote from the Wartburg that now he knew what it was to translate, and why, hitherto, no translator had dared to put his name to his work,[1] he proves that he was aware that all previous German translations were anonymous, a fact which presupposes some acquaintance with them. Older translations cannot have been inaccessible to him at the Wartburg, and might well have been sent him by friends at Eisenach or Wittenberg, who, as we know, did occasionally send him books; when he had returned home, moreover, he could easily have found copies in his old monastery or at the University. Portions of the Bible, viz. the Plenaries, were doubtless within his reach from the first, and since he finished his translation of the New Testament in so short a time as three months, though all the while engaged on a number of other works, it is only natural to suppose that he lightened his labours by the use of other versions within his reach as any other scholar would have done, though undoubtedly he used his own judgment in his selection. That, in the work of revision at Wittenberg at a much later date, the mediæval text was employed, appears quite plain from the alterations introduced by Luther.

J. Geffcken was probably not far wrong when he wrote in 1855 in "Der Bilderkatechismus des 15. Jahrhunderts," "that the similarity between Luther's version and the old translations could not be merely fortuitous."[2]

The same was repeated with still greater emphasis by Krafft in 1883 after he had instituted fresh comparisons: "Whoever compares these passages can no longer doubt that the agreement between Luther's work and the mediæval German Bible is not merely accidental."[3] The result of further research will probably be to confirm the guarded opinion expressed as long ago as 1803 by G. W. Meyer of

[1] See above, p. 495.

[2] P. 6. See W. Walther, "Luthers Bibelübersetzung kein Plagiat," p. 2. This writing appeared previously (without illustrations) in the "N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 1, p. 359 ff., and has been reproduced since in "Zur Wertung der deutschen Reformation," 1909, p. 723 f.

[3] "Über die deutsche Bibel vor Luther," 1883; cp. Walther, *ib.*, p. 8, as also pp. 2 and 4.

Göttingen in his "Geschichte der Schrifterklärung": to assume that "the older translation was not unknown to him," "that he consulted it here and there," and even "made his own some of its happy renderings," is quite compatible with a high esteem for Luther's translation.[1]

Modern Protestant writers in this field are also somewhat sceptical about the theory of Luther's complete ignorance of the older translation of the Bible, and the assertion that he made no use whatever of it. O. Reichert, for instance, in his new work "Luthers deutsche Bibel" makes the following remarks on Luther's work in the Wartburg, with which we may fittingly conclude this section: "Although he probably was able to make use of Lang's translation of 1521 in his rendering of Matthew, and as a matter of fact did have recourse to it, and though he most likely also had the old German translation at his elbow, as is apparent from many coincidences, nevertheless, what Luther accomplished is an achievement worthy of all admiration."[2]

4. Luther's Hymns

Amongst the means to be employed for the spread and consolidation of the new Evangel Luther included, in addition to his Bible, German hymns for use in public worship.

In 1523 and 1524 especially, he busied himself in the making of verses. In his *Formula Missæ* (1523) he expresses the wish that as many German hymns as possible be introduced into the revised service of the Mass and sung, not only by the choir, but by the whole congregation, though, for the nonce, the customary Latin hymns might be used.[3] With his wonted energy and industry he at once entrusted the work of composing hymns to some of his Wittenberg friends, and despatched letters so as to obtain help even from afar. He was particularly anxious to see the Psalms in a German dress. His translation of the Psalter, which he had just completed, naturally drew his thoughts to the Psalms which so admirably express all the religious emotions of the soul, especially its trusting reliance upon God. He was not very confident of his own powers of

[1] *Ib.*, p. 1. [2] "Luthers deutsche Bibel," p. 23.
[3] "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 17. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 205 ff.

composition: "I have not the knack of doing this as well as I wish to have it done," he writes to his old friend Spalatin at Nuremberg.[1] He asks him and his other friends for an eminently simple, popular versification of the Psalms, in pure German, "free from the new-fangled words used at Court"; it should keep as closely as possible to the sense and yet not be stilted. For this Spalatin was qualified by "a rich flow of eloquence, and by many years' experience." Luther sends him at the same time a poetic effort of his own.

In view of the beauty and the deep albeit simple grandeur of the olden Catholic hymns the task Luther had undertaken of composing something new was naturally not an easy one. He himself had much to say in praise of the magnificent old hymns in which the faithful praised their Creator or poured forth their griefs before Him. "In Popery," he once said in a sermon, "they used to sing some fine hymns: 'He who broke the might of Hell,' item 'Jesus Christ to-day is risen.' This comes from the heart."[2] "A beautiful sequence is also sung in Advent," he says, thus paying tribute even to a Latin hymn, viz. the *Mittitur ad Virginem*. "It is well done and not too barbarous."[3]

Luther nevertheless persevered in his own efforts in spite of his misgivings, especially as the contributions of his assistants failed to reach his standards. Of the eight hymns contained in the so-called Wittenberg "Achtliederbuch" four were composed by Luther, while of the twenty-five in the Erfurt "Enchiridion" eighteen were his; the collection, however, which he characterised as having been started by himself, the "Geistliche Gesangbüchlein" of Johann Walther, consisting chiefly of translations or adaptations, contained thirty-two hymns, twenty-four of them being written by Luther. This was the result of his efforts up to the end of 1524.[4]

In later years only twelve other hymns were published by him, of which some, like the familiar "A safe stronghold," and that intended in the first instance for children: "In

[1] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 273: "*Ego non habeo tantum gratiæ, ut tale quid possem quale vellem.*"

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 5^3, p. 23. [3] *Ib.*, 62, p. 311.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, p. 536 ff. We can hardly concur in the opposite conclusions arrived at by F. Spitta, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott, Die Lieder Luthers," Göttingen, 1905, owing to the problematical character of his chronology.

Thy Word preserve us, Lord," were not originally meant for use in public worship. A hymn, likewise not written for public worship, yet one of the oldest, as it dates from the summer of 1523, is the one where Luther extols the glorious martyrdom of two of his followers, who were executed in the Netherlands as heretics. Including this the number of his compositions rises to thirty-seven.

The number is not excessive considering how prolific his genius as a rule was, but among them are hymns, which, owing to their simple vigour and fine wording, bear witness to the author's real talent for this form of literature. Thus, for instance, " From highest heaven on joyous wing," " Ah God, look down from heaven and see," " Dear is to me the Holy Maid " (the Church), finally and above all the hymn " A safe stronghold our God is still " (" Ein' feste Burg "), which for ages has had so stimulating an effect on his followers. When, in these compositions, Luther shakes off the trammels of pedantry and leaves his spirit to go its own way, he often strikes the true poetic note.[1] He was endowed with a powerful fancy, nor was there ever any lack of warmth, nay passion, in his expression of his inward experiences ; in addition to this there was his rare gift of language, his keen appreciation of music and song, which he regarded as the " very gift of God " and to which, " next to theology," he allotted the first place ;[2] the art he possessed of making the whole congregation to share in what he himself felt, and his careful avoidance of any conscious striving after originality contributed to render many of these productions acknowledged works of genius.

Most characteristic of all in this respect is the rousing hymn " Ein' feste Burg." The result, as shown above,[3] of outward circumstances as well as of inward experiences, it gives the fullest expression to Luther's own defiance. In so far as Luther succeeded in depicting his cause as that of all his followers, and, with rare power, made his own defiant spirit ring from every lip, we may accept the opinion of a recent Luther biographer on the hymn in question, viz. that

[1] Janssen remarks, he not " infrequently revealed himself as a true poet " (" Hist. of the German People," Engl. Trans., 11, p. 258), and, that, " in his work of adapting and expanding, he not seldom shows himself a true poet."

[2] " Werke," Erl. ed. 62, p. 311. Table-Talk.

[3] Above, p. 342 ff.

it expresses the "defiance of Protestantism." "So entirely does Luther's hymn spring from the feeling common to the whole of Protestantism, that we seem to hear Protestants yet unborn joining in it. The trumpets of Gustavus Adolphus and the cannon of Lützen are audible in this hymn of defiance. It reminds us of Torstensson and Coligny, of Cromwell and William of Orange."[1] We must, however, remember that part of the impression it creates must be attributed to the powerful pre-reformation melody to which the words are set.

We give the hymn below in Carlyle's fine rendering[2]:

Psalm XLVI. (XLV.)

Deus Noster Refugium et Virtus

1. A safe stronghold our God is still,
   A trusty shield and weapon.
   He'll help us clear from all the ill
   That hath us now o'ertaken.
   The ancient Prince of Hell
   Hath risen with purpose fell,
   Strong mail of Craft and Power
   He weareth in this hour,
   On Earth is not his fellow.

2. With force of arms we nothing can,
   Full soon were we down-ridden.
   But for us fights the proper Man
   Whom God Himself hath bidden.
   Ask ye, Who is this name?
   Christ Jesus is His name,
   The Lord Zebaoth's Son,
   He and no other one
   Shall conquer in the battle.

3. And were this world all Devils o'er
   And watching to devour us,
   We lay it not to heart so sore
   Not they can overpower us.

[1] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, pp. 155, 158.

[2] Ph. Wackernagel, "Das deutsche Kirchenleid von der ältesten Zeit bis zum 17. Jahr.," 3, 1870, p. 20. Cp. "Form und Ordnung gaystlicher Gesang," etc., Augsburg, 1529. Cp. Wackernagel, *ib.*, p. 20, the text of the first High German reproduction of the Wittenberg Hymnbook, and the less accurate reprint, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 343 f., and Nelle, "Gesch. des deut. ev. Kirchenliedes,"[1] 1904, p. 24 (2nd ed., 1909).

And let the Prince of Ill
Look grim as e'er he will,
He harms us not a whit,
For why? His doom is writ,
A word shall quickly slay him.

4. God's Word, for all their craft and force,
One moment shall not linger,
But, spite of Hell, shall have its course,
'Tis written by His finger.
And though they take our life,
Goods, honour, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small.
These things shall vanish all,
The City of God remaineth.

Though Protestants are fond of extolling the sincere faith expressed in Luther's hymns (nay even speak of the "overwhelming fervour of his faith"[1]) we must not forget, that in some of them bitter polemics strike a harsh and very unpoetic note, quite out of harmony with the otherwise good and pious thoughts. The "Children's Hymn" to be sung against the two arch-enemies of Christ and His holy Church, viz. the Pope and the Turk, dating from 1541 at the latest, begins with the verse:

Lord, by Thy Word deliverance work
And stay the hand of Pope and Turk
Who Jesus Christ Thy Son
Would hurl down from His throne.[2]

This hymn became ultimately "One of the principal hymns of the Evangelical flock."[3]

No less noticeable is Luther's anti-Catholic prejudice in his "Song of the Two Martyrs of Christ at Brussels" and in the hymn "To new strains we raise our voices." But even when the words do not sound directly controversial the substance often serves as a weapon against the old faith and was thus understood by his followers; this was the case, for instance, with the hymn just referred to on the Church. The hymns, in fact, were intended, as he says in his preface to Johann

[1] In an advertisement of Will Vesper, "Luthers Dichtungen," Munich, 1905.

[2] Wackernagel, *ib.*, 3, p. 26. Cp. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 354.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 587.

Walther's collection, "to advance and further the Holy Gospel which by the grace of God has once more dawned." To this end he would gladly see "all the arts, more particularly that of music, employed in the service of Him Who created them and bestowed them on us."[1] The more he was animated by the fighting instinct, the better he fancies he can compose. "If I am to compose, write, pray or preach well, I must be angry." "Then my blood boils and my understanding grows keener."[2] His opponents complained that his popular hymns against the Church excited the people and that they "sang themselves into" the new faith.

Just as the polemics of their author detracts from the real poetic value of some of the hymns, so, in spite of all his good-will, there are other defects to decrease the value of his work. Owing to hasty workmanship his poesy has suffered. His roughness explains how "much in his work sounds harsh and clumsy."[3] Nevertheless the very fact that they were Luther's own made them praiseworthy in the eyes of his olden admirers.[4]

Owing to their hearty reception in Protestant circles, to their use both in public worship and elsewhere, and also because they served as a model and exerted a powerful influence on later Protestant efforts to promote hymnology, they won for their author the proud title of the Father of Protestant psalmody. The earliest Protestants, in their ignorance of what obtained in Catholicism previous to his day, even pushed their esteem for his labours so far as to call him simply the Father of Hymnology. "What made him the great poet of our nation," a modern Protestant historian declares, "was his individuality and the boldness of his expression. He was not, nor did he wish to be, the Father of German psalmody, but he was in very truth the Father of *Evangelical* psalmody."[5]

When the introduction of hymns in the new form of

[1] At the beginning of the "Geistliche Gesangbüchlein" of Johann Walther. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 538.

[2] Cp. Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 167.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 541.

[4] G. Gervinus, "Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung," 3^5, 1871, p. 20.

[5] Spitta, "Ein' feste Burg," p. 372. W. Bäumker, "Das kathol. Kirchenlied in seinen Singweisen," 1, 1886, p. 32, makes a similar distinction. Cp. p. 16 ff.

public worship came up for discussion, Luther, owing to the exigencies of the case, showed himself by no means intolerant of the numerous hymns dating from Catholic times then still in use.

We can the more readily understand this seeing the praise he himself lavished on these hymns, the inspiring strains of which still rang in his ears from the days of his youth. It is true that not many of them appeared to him to have the "true spirit." In his service of the Mass where this remark occurs he wished only three of these to be retained for the time being, viz. the Communion hymn, "Praised be God and blest, Who Himself becomes our Guest," the Whitsun hymn, "Now we crave of the Holy Ghost" and the Christmas hymn, "A tender Child is born To us this very morn." The Whitsun hymn and the Communion hymn were enlarged later, i.e. revised. He also took from an older model the first verse of another Whitsun hymn which he composed. His Easter hymn, "Christ lay in His Winding-sheet," was a revision of the older Catholic hymn, "Jesus Christ to-day is risen," into which he has introduced part of the Latin Easter sequence. His hymns, "In the midst of life cruel death surrounds us" and "God our Father bide with us" are also adaptations of older Catholic hymns for use in processions. In his rendering of the Ten Commandments into German verse he seems to have taken as his model a similar composition dating from earlier days and also used in processions. "Heirlooms of Catholicism" are also three old chants which he translated from the Latin, "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come," "Saviour of the heathen known" and "Now praise we Christ the Holy One."[1]

The Middle Ages had always been noted for their renderings of the Psalms and hymns of the Church, and their productions compare favourably with Luther's compositions, the more so since he is seldom at his best when he is not free to develop his own thoughts.[2] Speaking of translations and alluding to those made by his colleagues Luther declared in 1529: "Some have now given proof of their ability and have increased the number of hymns; they far outstrip me

[1] On the above see Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 536 ff.

[2] In Luther's hymns for public worship modelled on the Psalms "no poetic enthusiasm is apparent." Spitta, *ib.*, p. 355. He also assigns the lowest place to the translations of the Latin hymns.

and must be regarded as experts in this field."[1] Many had been the poets who had turned the old Latin hymns into German ; particularly worthy of mention were the monk of Salzburg in the 14th and Heinrich of Laufenberg in the 15th century. Many of these hymns can take their place beside Luther's rendering of Psalm xlvi. (xlv.), "Ein' feste Burg," though the trust in God they express and the unshaken faith of their childlike language is far removed from any presumptuous reliance on private judgment in religious matters or subjective revelations. Of the use of German hymns Provost Gerhoch of Reichersberg wrote as early as the 12th century : "The whole people breaks out into praise of the Saviour in the hymns of their mother tongue ; especially is this the case with the Germans whose language lends itself so well to melody."[2] At the close of the Middle Ages it might be said with truth : "The German nation possessed a hoard of hymns, such as no other nation in the world could show."[3]

It is not only Luther who frequently admits that he had "included in his hymnbook some of the songs of our forefathers" as "bearing witness to the good Christians who lived before our day,"[4] but even the *Apologia* for the Confession of Augsburg had to admit in its defence of the Protestant ritual : "The use [of German hymns] has always been regarded as praiseworthy in the churches ; though more German hymns are sung in some places than in others, nevertheless, in all the churches the people have always sung something in German, hence the practice is not at all novel."[5]

That *something* was always sung in German is perfectly correct ; in the liturgy properly so-called, viz. the Mass, the rule was to sing in Latin the Proper, Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, etc. Hence the standing of vernacular hymns was different

[1] In the Preface to the new edition of his hymnbook (1529). Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 587.

[2] Migne, "P.L.," 185, p. 391. E. Michael ("Gesch. des deutschen Volkes vom 13. Jahrh. bis zum Ausgang des MA.", 4^3, 1906, p. 327 ff.) shows not only that German psalmody existed in the 13th century, but also that it can be traced back with certainty to the 11th and 12th centuries. Cp. also Bäumker, "KL.," art. "Kirchenlied," 7^2, p. 602.

[3] Bäumker, *ib.*, p. 604.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 605.

[5] "Confess. Aug.," art. 24 de missa.—Cp. for the foregoing, Janssen, *ib.* (Engl. Trans.), 1, p. 264 ff.

in the case of Catholics from what it was with Protestants. With the latter the edification of the congregation was the principal thing, whereas, for the Catholic, public worship had in the eucharistic sacrifice something quite independent of private devotion ; it was in keeping with the character of this universal sacrifice offered by all nations and tongues that its rites should be conducted in Latin, the universal language. The only strictly liturgical Psalmody in the Middle Ages was the Latin Gregorian chant. The German hymn held only a subordinate place in the liturgy, being inserted sometimes in connection with the sequence after the Gradual, or, more usually, before and after the sermon. On the other hand, recourse to German hymns was usual in extra-liturgical devotions, in processions, pilgrimages and in pious gatherings of the people whether at home or in the church.

The hymn tunes made use of in the Middle Ages were also in every case either Gregorian or quasi-Gregorian. Thus the musical language of popular piety was able to maintain its dignity, was preserved faithful to the traditions of the great ages of the Church and secure from the inroads of private fancy.

The melodies to which Luther set his own compositions and those of his friends had also been handed down from earlier times. Some of them were purely Gregorian, others were those of older Catholic hymns or of popular ditties. The melody of " A Safe Stronghold," as already observed, is derived from the Latin chant, and so is that of " Jesaia dem Propheten " and others. Even the setting of the versified creed " We all believe in one true God " is borrowed from a 15th-century composition.

Protestant admiration for Luther has indeed led " to his being represented as a notable composer,[1] and thus many of these tunes bear his name. Careful research has, however, shattered this delusion. . . . Many other melodies, which so far it has been impossible to trace to the Middle Ages, probably form part of the pre-reformation treasury of hymns. . . . Whether, as modern research is inclined to think, the simple new melody to ' Saviour of the heathen

[1] According to Heinr. v. Stephan, " Luther als Musiker," Bielefeld (1899), p. 16, he was even " the reformer of German music."

known,' . . . is Luther's own, it is not possible to determine."[1]

The traditional fondness of Germans for song was used to spread erroneous doctrines not by Luther alone, but also by others of the New Believers; this was particularly the case with the followers of Schwenckfeld, who exploited it in the interests of their sect. Luther's hymnbook even stood in danger of being "spoilt" by outside additions, hence the precaution he took of appending the authors' names to the various hymns; he also prefixed a special "Warnung" to the Preface of an edition brought out towards the end of his life (1542).[2]

Among the songs falsely attributed to Luther is one on the "Out-driving of Antichrist." In old editions this "Song for the Children, wherewith to drive out the Pope in Mid-Lent"[3] is indeed ascribed to Luther, but we learn from Mathesius's "Historien" that it was he who brought the text of it to Luther in the spring of 1545 on the occasion of his last visit. The song is a modification of an older one still sung in places even to-day, on Laetare Sunday, for the chasing away of winter. The unknown versifier, who was perhaps Mathesius himself, has transferred to the Pope-Antichrist what was intended for the winter. Luther was pleased with the verses and himself undertook their publication.[4] There is a great difference between the cheerful, innocent verses still sung by children to-day: "Now let us drive the Winter out," etc.,[5] and the malicious version which Luther popularised and which was even included in many of the Lutheran hymnbooks, for instance in the collection dating from 1547, "Etliche tröstliche Gebet, Psalmen und geistliche Lieder," etc. There it is entitled "A Christian song for Children." It occurs in the Königsberg Enchiridion of 1560, together with another Old German children's song, to be sung on the way home.[6]

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 541 f. Cp. Janssen, *ib.* (Engl. Trans.), 11, p. 242 ff.

[2] "Vil falscher Meister itzt Lieder dichten
Siehe dich für und lern sie recht richten.
Wo Gott hinbawet sein Kirch und sein Wort,
Da wil der Teuffel sein mit Trug und Mord."

[3] Wackernagel, *ib.*, 3, p. 30.

[4] Loesch, "Mathesius," 2, p. 214 ff. "Historien," Bl. 179: "I brought him the song with which the children (in the Joachimsthal) drive out the Pope in Mid-Lent. . . . This song he published and himself wrote the title: '*Ex montibus et vallibus, ex sylvis et campestribus.*'" The broadsheet of 1541 mentioned by Schamelius in his "Lieder-Commentarius," 1757, p. 57, if it ever existed, must have preceded Luther's publication, and be by some unknown author.

[5] Cp., for instance, the May-song in the Baden Collection, by A. Barner, Hft. 2, No. 14, p. 15. [6] Wackernagel, *ib.*, 3, p. 31.

The first lines of the hymn for the Out-driving of Antichrist run as follows :[1]

1. Now let us drive the Pope from out
Christ's kingdom and God's house devout,
For murderously he has ruled,
And countless souls to ruin fooled.

2. Be off with you, you damnéd son,
You scarlet bride of Babylon ;
Horror and antichrist thou art,
Lies, murder, cunning fill thy heart.

[1] Wackernagel, *ib.*, p. 30. Cp. Janssen, *ib.* (Engl. Trans.), 11, p. 286.

CHAPTER XXXV

LUTHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

1. Historical Outlines for Judging of his Social Work

It would be beyond our present scope to examine in detail all the views advanced concerning Luther's social and economic attitude. Recent research in social economics has already rectified many of these.

What the historian of sociology chiefly misses is any appreciation of Luther in the light of the theories and conditions prevailing at the close of the Middle Ages. It has been remarked quite rightly, that, from the way in which the matter is dealt with in Protestant Church-history and "practical theology," it is perfectly clear that, hitherto, the Middle Ages have in many instances been altogether misjudged.[1]

There is still much for historical research to do in this field. Neglect to study as they deserved whole centuries of our history, prolific though they were in great things, has avenged itself by the one-sided character of the prevalent views concerning them. In the case of many writers too much attention to the verdicts pronounced by Luther on every possible occasion against the Church of the past is what is chiefly responsible for their disinclination to pursue

[1] Cp., for instance, L. Feuchtwanger, "Gesch. der sozialen Politik und des Armenwesens im Zeitalter der Reformation," in "Jahrb. f. Gesetzgebung," etc., ed. G. Schmoller, N.F. 32, 1908, p. 168 ff. and 33, 1909, p. 191 ff., more particularly p. 179 f. (The 2nd art. is quoted below as II.) With regard to the Protestant theologians (G. Uhlhorn and others) Feuchtwanger says, p. 180: "In their hands the question of the care for the poor since 1500 has degenerated into a sectarian controversy on priority, and thus the way to the solution of the problem has been blocked by a falsification of the true question." He regards Uhlhorn's work as written from an "extreme sectarian" standpoint. To Feuchtwanger, as it had been to Strindberg, it is a marvel, how, "as soon as you begin to speak of God and charity, your voice grows hard and your eyes become filled with hate."

the matter further; they are too prone to regard things from the watch-tower of Lutheran theology. It is not so very long since hardly any paradox or calumny against the social "disorders" prevalent amongst the clergy and the monks, in family life and the commonwealth under Popery, was too monstrous, provided it had been uttered by the Wittenberg Professor, to be dished up again, though possibly under somewhat politer form, by the occupants of Protestant pulpits and chairs of theology.

Statements such as the following, taken word for word from recent works, which, following our habit, we shall refrain from naming, are based on the traditional assertions of controversy and on insufficient acquaintance with the Middle Ages.

"Luther accomplished something eminently positive when he put the State-idea on those lines which it was ultimately to follow in his own country." For, "according to him, the duty of the State is the promotion of the general welfare." "We have the fullest right to appeal to the spirit of his State policy, above all, because, in opposition to the mediæval view, it conceded to the State an independent status." "The State, according to him, was to put in practice in social life the principle of 'serving our neighbour.'"

We often find all "political" as well as all "civil freedom" traced back to Luther. He it was, so we are told, who introduced, or laid the foundations for, the real mutual tolerance displayed by citizens in the State, just as he did for the principle of nationality, for scientific freedom, for the freedom for invention, and, finally, for the freedom of the Press.

He "laid constant stress on charity towards our neighbour in direct contrast to the individualism of the Middle Ages, when even almsgiving resolved itself ultimately into mere selfish interest, the giver living in hope of a heavenly reward." "He proclaimed that: Mendicancy was to be done away with. . . . The number of the destitute, and their claim on public benevolence he reduced to a minimum. These principles are in direct contrast with the devout and indiscriminate almsgiving of the Middle Ages and paved the way for the modern poor-law system."

"The sanctity of the home and the family had suffered severely under the influence of monasticism." Luther had to "reorganise the methods of education in order to make, of the home and the family, institutions for the public welfare." He became the "father of the modern National Schools."

"In his plans for the maintenance and direction of civic affairs Luther once more brought into their own the 'principles of social responsibility.'"

He set aside the mediæval "contempt for material things

and for labour as a means of production." Luther performed a signal service to economics by restoring respect for work; for, "maybe, there was no phenomenon of mediæval life which presented a greater obstacle to material happiness than laziness." "Economic progress was impossible" where the theory prevailed, that "the contemplative life was of greater value than the active." "Luther bestowed new dignity not only on work in general, but also on its every branch"; according to him "no work is degrading which serves the interests of mankind."

He was the "guardian and promoter of the interests of society," and the "importance of his influence is still more enhanced by the fact that he showed himself a conservative and guiding spirit in the midst of social disorder and confusion of ideas."

If this holds good of the service he rendered to society as a whole, he was also within narrower limits the "reformer and restorer" of family life. His own marriage was "one of his greatest reforming acts, by which he confirmed his rehabilitation of the conjugal state, and, by his labours as a whole, he secured to marriage, and thus to the very foundation of family life, the prerogative of being a 'divine institution.'" He brought the duties of the family into respect, whereas, formerly, "the Church, which permeated everything, had been the cause of their neglect."

"It remains an historical truth that the greatness of the German people in politics, economics and intellectual life may be traced back to those divine powers which the Reformation set free by its recognition of the free grace of God in Christ."

There are, however, other Protestant scholars, who are not theologians, who regard such praise of Luther's social importance as either quite mistaken or at least greatly exaggerated; in their opinion Luther's services lay rather in his work for religion, and on behalf of the knowledge of God and union with Him by faith.

L. Feuchtwanger, for instance, a representative sociologist, recently spoke in tones almost ironical of the view held "by most [Protestant] Church-historians," who praise "the religion of Luther as having produced autonomous ethics, the modern State, a society that despises idleness, the German family, in short all that is great and good." He is of opinion that such views call for "revision"; nor would such a revision, so he says, "detract from the eminent importance of the reformation."[1] We shall speak later on of the proofs he adduces to show the error of the "obstinate opinion," as he terms it, "that Protestantism created the modern system of public charity,"[2] and that Luther brought about the regeneration of benevolence.

E. Troeltsch, the Heidelberg theologian, says in "Die Bedeu-

[1] "Gesch. der sozialen Politik," etc., II., p. 207. [2] *Ib.*, p. 221.

tung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt" : "As a matter of fact, the importance of Protestantism must not be one-sidedly exaggerated. The foundations of the modern world in the State, in society, in economics, learning and art were established in a great measure independently of Protestantism, partly as an outgrowth of the later Middle Ages, partly as the result of the Renaissance, particularly of the Renaissance as assimilated by Protestantism, partly—as in the case of the Catholic countries, Spain, Austria, Italy and especially France—after the rise of Protestantism and concurrently with it." "With the principle of nationalism," writes Troeltsch, "his [Luther's] system of an established Church had no connection. The latter merely promoted the solidification and centralisation of the chief authorities, whereas the former is a product of the entirely modern democratic awakening of the masses and the romantic idea of a national spirit." In another passage he says : "There can be no question of [Protestantism] having paved the way for the modern idea of freedom—of science, of thought, or of the press—nor of its having inspired the scholarship which it controlled with new aims, or led it to break new ground."[1]

There are even Protestants who are disposed to deny that Luther took any interest in the State and in public affairs. "It follows from Luther's views of life," writes Erich Brandenburg, the author of "Luthers Anschauung vom Staate und der Gesellschaft," "that a Christian neither can nor ought to care for the outbuilding of the existing order of the State and society. For 'God has thrown us into the world and put us under the rule of the devil, so that here we have no paradise but look forward hourly to every kind of misfortune to life and limb, wife and child, goods and honour.'[2] . . . By the fact of his birth the Christian [according to Luther] has been given a definite place. . . . To seek for a better one, or to wish to create an entirely different state of things would be to rebel against the Will of God. Far from its being the Christian's duty to strive after an improvement in the order of the State or of society, any such striving would be really sinful." "He [Luther] regards civil life as merely one aspect of the probation which he has to endure on earth" ; in his eyes the struggle for political freedom simply implies an "unlawful devotion to earthly aims, an absence of trust in God, and an attempt to create a paradise on earth by our own strength."[3] Where tyranny prevails one is not even allowed to emigrate, so Luther insists, unless indeed the ruler will not suffer the Evangel, when it became lawful and advisable, to seek another home.[4] Nowadays people have a different conception,

[1] (Munich and Berlin, 1906), pp. 13, 41, 49, reprinted from "Hist. Zeitschr.," 97, 1906, p. 1 ff., republished in 1911 in an enlarged form.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 644 ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 169. "Ob Kriegsleutte," etc., 1526. [3] *Ib.*, 30, 2, p. 138=31, p. 67 f.

[4] *Ib.*, 19, p. 634=22, p. 258. Those who emigrate become "faithless and break their oath to their rulers" ; "they do not bear in mind the divine command, that they are bound to remain obedient until

so Brandenburg points out, of national greatness and political freedom.[1]

Albert Kalthoff, a Bremen preacher, who belongs to the extreme left of the Protestant party, goes still further: "There is a considerable amount of conceit sticking to our Protestant churches, indeed the Reformation festival seems to afford it a fitting occasion for celebrating each year its orgy. What is not Protestantism supposed to have brought to the world? National freedom and prosperity, modern science and technicology, all this we hear described as the fruit of the tree of Protestant life; not long since I even read of a German professor who quite seriously ascribed the whole of our present-day civilisation to Luther."[2]

Luther's favourable traits in respect of social conditions, his eloquent admonitions on family life and love of our neighbour deserve a high place. There is no call again to bring forward examples after all we have quoted elsewhere. Luther is even fond of including under the "neighbourly love" of which he so frequently speaks the whole of our social activity on behalf of our fellow men.[3]

His struggle against voluntary celibacy and renunciation of the world, however ill advised, had at least one good result, viz. that it afforded him an opportunity to speak strongly on the duties of the home, which were so often neglected, on the importance of the humble, everyday tasks involved in matrimony and the training of children, on work at home and for the community, whether in a private or a public capacity. That plentiful children were a blessing, a principle which had always been recognised in the Christian world, he insisted upon emphatically in connection with his advocacy of marriage. The keeping of the fourth commandment, which had always been regarded as the corner-stone of society, was warmly emphasised by him as regards the

they are prevented by force or are put to death"; they are "robbing their sovereign of his rights and authority" over them. On such general grounds Luther concludes that it was not lawful to desert and join the Turks.

[1] Pages 17, 26.

[2] "Das Zeitalter der Reformation," Jena, 1907, p. 1. Cp. "M. Luthers Werke," "revised and edited for the German people," by Julius Boehmer, Stuttgart, 1907, Introd., p. ix, where the theological editor says: "With Luther a new era begins. He has been and is considered the author of a new civilisation, different from that of the Middle Ages and of antiquity. . . . The emancipation of the human intellect began in the domain of religion and has gradually extended thence into other spheres in spite of obstacles and difficulties."

[3] See, for instance, above, pp. 45 f., 476 f., and vol. iv., p. 472 ff.

relations both to parents and to other secular authorities. It would be hard to gainsay that his teaching has bequeathed to Protestantism a wealth of instructions on the cultivation of family affection and the maintenance of a well-ordered household. From the first it was beneficial to the social foundations of society, and its good influence has been apparent even down to our own times. Luther's writings and sermons, as we soon shall see, also contain some excellent admonitions against usury as well as against begging; he preaches contentment with our lot as well as honest industry; he has also much to say of relief of the poor and education of the young either for the learned professions or for life in general. In the same way that he sought to interest the community more and more in the relief of the indigent—though by rather novel means, which it seemed to him might take the place of the help formerly afforded by the churches, monasteries and private charity—so also his appeals on behalf of the schools were addressed more to the congregation, the authorities and the State than had been customary in the days of the Church schools. The increased share now taken by these bodies in this work, if kept within reasonable bounds, might indeed turn out advantageous, though the results did not reach his expectations, and in fact did not show themselves until much later, and then were due to factors altogether independent of Protestantism.

It must also be pointed out to Luther's credit that he at once vigorously withstood the communistic views which had begun to make their appearance even before his day, as soon as experience had opened his eyes to their dangers. He perceived the radical trend of the Anabaptists—which it is true was not without some affinity with his own doctrines. He came after a while to oppose in popular writings the extravagant social demands of the peasants, and, in spite of the crass exaggeration of his language, his tracts give many a useful hint for the improvement of existing conditions on Christian lines.

The charge he brings against earlier times, viz. that, owing to the too great number of clergy and religious a premium had been placed on idleness,[1] is perhaps not devoid of a grain of truth; nor was his complaint that the indolence of so many people who lived by the Church endangered the

[1] See above, vol. i., p. 49 f.

welfare of the State and was opposed to the interests of the community altogether unjustified.[1] The strongly worded passages where Luther speaks in favour of work and exhorts the authorities to cultivate and promote labour were quite in place, though it is true they can be matched by a whole row of equally vigorous admonitions by Catholic writers, dating from the Middle Ages and from the years immediately preceding Luther's day.[2]

Owing to his having by his attacks on ecclesiastical institutions dried up many of the existing sources of charity there can be no doubt that indirectly he contributed to awaken those who were less well off to a sense of their duty to work for their own living. In this wise the sense of responsibility was aroused in the masses. The secular authorities were also obliged to intervene more frequently owing to the falling off in the support afforded by the Church to the needy and oppressed, particularly in cases where all the labour and exertion of the individual were insufficient to guarantee subsistence or legal protection. In so far therefore, viz. in regard of the growing needs of social life, it has been truly remarked that the religious revolution of the 16th century smoothed the way for the material conditions of modern society and new cultural problems; in this sense Luther assisted in bringing about the economic conditions of the present day. We shall say nothing here of the rise of the modern spirit with its rejection of authority and its principle of unrestrained intellectual freedom.

Luther also helped in a certain sense to set the worldly authorities on their own feet and to make them more independent. This was an outcome of his violent struggle against the influence previously exerted over the State by the olden Church, or to speak more accurately of his assault on the Church as such, albeit it was attended by the other eminently unfortunate results. In the course of history,

[1] H. Boehmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," 1906, p. 133, however, calls it a "great exaggeration" when Eberlin of Günzburg, the former Franciscan who afterwards became a follower of Luther, asserts that in Germany only one man in fifteen did any work. He has also the best of reasons for disbelieving Agricola's statement, that the monks and nuns in Germany then numbered over 1,400,000 souls.

[2] Cp. N. Paulus, "Die Wertung der weltlichen Berufe im MA." ("Hist. Jahrb.," 1911, p. 725 ff), particularly p. 746 ff.

according to the Divine plan, new and useful elements not seldom spring up from evil seed. Owing to a too close union of the two powers and the assumption of many worldly functions by the Church, the representatives of the latter were too often exposed in their work to a not unjustifiable criticism. The Church was charged with being inefficient in her management of outward business and this detracted from the respect due to her spiritual functions; unnecessary jealousy was aroused and social developments in themselves desirable were frequently retarded. Thus, though the storm let loose by Luther wrought great devastation, yet it is not to be regretted that since then many temporal forces now transferred from the Church to the State have been set to work with satisfactory results such as might otherwise not have been attained. In some places certainly they had come into operation long before this, but speaking generally, things in this respect were still in a backward state.

Important factors for judging of Luther's social work are two ideas on which he laid great stress and which we have already discussed. One is the separation of the Church from the world, which, albeit, in very contradictory fashion, he attempted to carry out; the other is his plea that the Church, which he sought to divest of all legislative power, possessed no authority to make binding laws. What has been said already may here be summed up anew with a few more quotations to the point.

We have in the first place the separation of the spiritual and supernatural. Luther's work did great harm in the sphere of the supernatural and, so far as his influence extended, alienated society from it.[1] His doctrine, particularly concerning the state of man, grace and good works was of such a nature as in reality to withdraw society from the supernatural atmosphere, however much he might extol the "knowledge of the free grace of God in Christ," which he claimed had been won by his exertions.

The detachment of the supernatural life expressed itself also in a systematic, jealous exclusion of any worldly meddling in the spiritual domain, for the rule of the Gospel must, according to Luther, be something quite distinct from

[1] Cp. above, pp. 49–60.

the worldly rule. By his principles and his writings he materially contributed to the secularisation of society and the State. According to him Christ simply says without any reservation: "My kingdom is no business of the Roman Emperor." The spiritual rule must be as far apart from the temporal rule "as heaven is from earth."[1]

"What is most characteristic of the kingdom of grace," so writes E. Luthardt, one of the best-known Lutheran moralists, who, however, fails to point out its want of clearness, "is the order of grace, whilst what is most characteristic of the kingdom of the world and the world's life is the order of law; they are quite different in kind nor do they run on the same lines but belong to entirely different worlds. To the one I belong as a Christian, to the other as a man; for we live at once in two different spheres of life, and are at the same time in heaven and on earth." "Each one must keep within his own limits," and "not make of the Gospel outward laws for life in the world, for Jesus gave His law only for Christians, not for the rest."[2]

Luthardt rightly appeals to Luther's words: "This is what the Gospel teaches you: It has nothing to do with worldly things, but leaves them as God has already disposed them by means of the worldly authorities." "The kingdom of Christ has nothing to do with outward things, but leaves them all unaltered to follow their own order." "In God's kingdom in which He rules through the Gospel there is no going to law, nor have we anything to do with law, but everything is summed up in forgiveness, remission and bestowing, and there is no anger or punishment, nothing but benevolence and service of our neighbour." As to the temporal matters, "there the lawyers are free to help and advise how things are to be." "If anyone were to try and rule the world according to the Gospel, just think, my good friend, what the result would be. He would break the chains and bonds that hold back the wild and savage beasts."[3]—It is true that he here altogether overlooks the fact that religion has, on the contrary, to help in governing the world by her moral laws, restraining the "wild and savage" elements by means of her laws, her authority and her means of grace; just as when speaking above of the two spheres of life in which man is placed he forgets that we are endowed with but one conscience and one responsibility, viz. that of the Christian, which is inseparable from man as he is at present constituted.

[1] E. Luthardt, "Die Ethik Luthers,"[2] 1875, where the above and other texts are quoted.

[2] *Ib.*, pp. 81, 88.

[3] For the passages see Luthardt, *ib.*

"Now, praise be to God, all the world knows," says Luther, of his sundering of the two spheres of life, "with what diligence and pains I have laboured and still labour to distinguish between the two offices or rules, the temporal and the spiritual, and to keep them apart; each one now is instructed as to his own work and kept to it, whereas in Popery it was all so entangled and in such confusion that no one kept within his own powers, dominion and rights."[1]

Protestants have found the essential difference between Protestantism and Catholicism to consist in the fact, that, according to Luther's directions, Protestantism separates "religion and theology, faith and knowledge, morality and politics, Christianity and art," whereas Catholicism, according to the motto of Pius X, seeks to "renew all things in Christ." "We know that revelation has only an inward mission to the individual soul; the Catholic believes in its public mission for universal civilisation." "We should fear for the purity of our faith and no less for morality and civilised order should these domains ever be christianised."[2]

The result of forbidding the "spiritual rule" ever to encroach on the temporal domain was so to enfeeble the precepts of ethics as to deprive them of any real authority for making themselves felt as a power in secular government.

With Luther everything is constructed without any basis of authority; he proffers, as he is fond of saying, "opinions and advice,"[3] and even this he does without a trace of theory or method; as for binding regulations he has none; nor has he any Church behind him that can set up an obligatory ethical standard; he recognises indeed the universal priesthood, but no Church with any paramount authority in spiritual things, no hierarchy and no social institution such as the Catholic Church is. This is the chief reason why his moral instructions lack any definite and binding force over people's minds. The great mass of mankind must be guided by clear and fixed rules, counsels which address themselves to man's good-will are in themselves practically useless for the direction or guidance of the masses, constituted as they are. The Gospel, moreover, in spite of what Luther says to the contrary, though it brings the glad tidings of salvation and forgiveness, also contains a large number of strict moral precepts; the Divine Founder of the Church, in His wisdom, also equipped her with full power to issue, on the lines

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 206; Erl. ed., 23, p. 94.
[2] F. M. Schiele, "Christliche Welt," 1908, No. 37.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 206; Erl. ed., 23, p. 95.

traced out by Himself, the commands called for by the needs of every age. She disposes of spiritual penalties and has the right to excommunicate offenders when this is necessary to emphasise her laws.

With Luther the last resource lay in the system of the State-Church. The "Christian authorities" became the authorities of the congregations (see below, p. 579 ff.).[1] Thus the founder of the new religion frequently requires the rulers who had rallied to his system to make use of their power in order to lend their sanction and authority to the ethical regulations he gave to his followers, and which he himself was unable to enforce.

Here we shall only consider one class of cases where it was of great importance to him to see his "opinion and advice" followed. According to him, as Luthardt himself admits in his "Ethik Luthers,"[2] "The authorities were to serve and promote the cause of the Evangel. . . . From this Luther went on, however, to give advice which really was at variance with his fundamental views. It is true when he demands that the rulers should not suffer any such sects as deny the rights, etc., of the authorities, he was merely imposing on them the fulfilment of one of the duties of the State,[3] but when he requires the rulers to make use of their powers to check the scandal of heresy and false worship, which was the most horrible and dangerous form of scandal; or, when heresy had been proved from Scripture, to forbid its preaching; 'to insist on the true worship, to punish and forbid false doctrine and idolatry and to risk everything rather than allow themselves and their people to be forced into idolatry and falsehood'; or 'to banish from the land

[1] Above, vol. iii., p. 22 ff. [2] Second ed., p. 124.

[3] Luthardt refers here to Luther's "Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 250 f., where the latter says in his exposition of Psalm lxxxii. (lxxxi.) 1530: "Because the rulers, besides their other duties, must promote God's Word and its preachers," "they must punish public blasphemers"; among these were the false teachers and those who teach that each one must himself make satisfaction for his sins (he means the Catholics). "Whoever wishes to live amongst the burghers must keep the laws of the borough and not dishonour or abuse them, else they must go," i.e. the rulers must compel those Catholics who were living amongst Protestants to emigrate. "The offender was acting contrary to the Gospel and the common article of the creed which we recite: 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' Such articles held by the whole of Christendom have already been sufficiently examined, proved and decided by Scripture and the confession of the whole of Christendom, confirmed by many miracles and sealed with the blood of the martyrs."

those who deny such articles as the Divinity of Christ and the redemption,' etc.; or again, when two opposing parties confront each other, as, for instance, the Lutherans and the Papists, to decide according to Scripture and forbid the party that failed to agree with Scripture to preach,[1]—all these and similar matters are plainly based on the assumption that the ruler had a right to form an independent opinion as to whether a doctrine was or was not in accordance with Scripture, an assumption which Luther, as a matter of fact, strongly deprecates in theory. When Luther speaks in this way he is taking it for granted that he has to do with a Christian ruler, who as such does not merely perform his office of ruler like the heathen Emperor or the Grand Turk, but is influenced by the Gospel and recognises the Word of God."

Expressed in different words Luthardt's ideas would amount to this: According to Luther it is imperative that the rulers should be good Lutherans and accept the Evangel and the Word of God as he taught it. No other Christian ruler may venture to put the above measures in force, for the truth is he is no Christian at all.

This leads us to look closer into Luther's ideas on the secular authority and the State-Church.

2. The State and the State Church

Most Protestant writers become very eloquent and go into great detail when dealing with the main ideas Luther is supposed to have expressed on the State and on social order.

He maintained, so they assert, and impressed strongly on all ages to come, that the purpose of the State was to keep the peace and uphold the right against the wicked by means of legislation and penalties: "*Magistratus instrumentum, per quod Deus pacem et iura conservat.*"[2] This temporal peace was the best earthly possession and comprised all temporal blessings; in point of

[1] In the continuation of the above passage Luther says of such controversies: "Let the rulers step in and examine the case and whichever party is not in agreement with Scripture, let him be commanded to be silent. . . . For it is not good for the people to hear contradictory preaching in the parish or district," etc. Luther, however, not only demands, as Luthardt says, that these "heretics" should be banished, but also that they should be punished as public blasphemers. Cp. below, p. 578.

[2] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 20, p. 97.

fact the "true preaching office" should, so he declared, bring peace, but with the greater number "this is not the case,"[1] so that the authority of the ruler was necessary for the maintenance of outward peace. "This worldly government," according to him, "preserves temporal peace, rights and life," indeed he says it makes wild beasts into men and saves men from becoming wild beasts.[2] The true Evangelical doctrine, unlike the earlier one, leads to the secular government being regarded as "the great gift of God and His own gracious order,"[3] notwithstanding that all authority was instituted by God on account of the sin that reigns in man. Human reason and experience, and also the Holy Ghost, must teach the authorities how to fulfil their duty. They must, so far as this is possible, work for the common welfare of their subjects in this world. Since, according to Luther, they must punish what is evil in their subjects' external behaviour and take care that "all public scandal be banished and removed,"[4] their task seems to trench on morals and on religion. Good sovereigns instruct their people concerning temporal things, "how to manage their homes and farms, how to rule the land and the people, how to make money and secure possessions, how to become rich and powerful," further, "how we are to till the fields, plough, sow, reap and keep our house."[5] In short the ruler must interest himself in the needs of his subjects as "though they were his very own."[6] The worldly rulers must provide for the support of their subjects, and particularly for the poor, the widows and orphans, and extend to them their fatherly protection.

Other fine sayings of Luther's on this subject and on the duties he assigns to the rulers are instanced in plenty.

The ruler "holds the place of a father, only that his sway is more extensive, for he is not merely the father of one family, as it were, but of as many as there are inhabitants, citizens or subjects in his country. . . . And because they bear this name and title and look upon it as in all honour their greatest treasure, it is our duty to respect them and regard them as our dearest, most precious possession on earth."[7] Luther insisted in the strongest terms on the duty of obedience, more par-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 538; Erl. ed., 17^2, p. 392. Luther, however, emphasises the true preaching office so much that he represents his pure Gospel teaching as alone capable of preserving peace, a fact which is usually passed over. "No University, institution or monastery" had been able to accomplish what the preaching office was now able to do; the "blind bloodhounds abandoned the preaching office and gave themselves up to lies."

[2] "Werke," *ib.*, p. 555=402.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 537 f.=392.

[4] Reference is made here to the passage in the Home-Postils, "Werke," Erl. ed., 3^2, p. 450. Here we read, p. 449, that the "rulers must promote matrimony and the management of the home, and see that the young are properly educated"; for this reason theirs was "a divine and holy state."

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 4^2, p. 388, in the Home-Postils.

[6] Cp. the passages in Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 321.

[7] Weim. ed., 31, 1, p. 153; Erl. ed., 21, p. 60.

ticularly after his experiences during the Peasant War. He emphasises very strongly, in opposition to the fanatics, that the secular Courts must rule and their authority be recognised, and also that the oath must be taken when required.

He even tells the rebels: "God would rather suffer the rulers who do what is wrong than the mob whose cause is just. The reason is that when Master Omnes wields the sword and makes war on the pretence that he is in the right, things fare badly. For a Prince, if he is to remain a Prince, cannot well chop off the heads of all, though he may act unjustly and cut off the heads of some." For he must needs retain some about him, continues Luther with a touch of humour; but when the mob is in revolt then "off go all the heads."[1] "Even where a ruler has pledged himself to govern his subjects in accordance with a constitution—'according to prearranged articles'—Luther will not admit that it is lawful to deprive him of his authority should he disregard his oath. . . . No one has the right or the command from God to enforce a penalty in the case of the authorities."[2] But things ought not to reach such a pass in the case of the prince's government. Obedience should make everything smooth for him. He cherishes and provides for all, as many as he has subjects, and may thus be called the father of them all, just as in old days the heathen called their pious rulers the fathers and saviours of the country."[3]

These ideas are not, however, peculiar to Luther. They were current long before his time and had been discussed from every point of view by Christian writers who, in turn, had borrowed them from antiquity.

In all this, which, furthermore, Luther never summed up in a theory, all that is new is his original and forcible manner of putting forward his ideas. "It is hardly possible to argue," says Frank G. Ward, one of the latest Protestant writers in this field, "that his view of the duty of the State contained anything very new. . . . The opinion that the State had an educational duty was held even in classical antiquity."[4] If it was held in Pagan times, still more so was this the case in the Christian Middle Ages. It is to classical antiquity that we just heard Luther appeal when he referred to the "*pater patriæ*." He had become acquainted in the Catholic schools with the ideas of antiquity purified by Christian philosophy.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 294.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 10. See below, p. 577, n. 1.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 240.
[4] "Darstellung und Würdigung der Ansichten Luthers vom Staat und seinen wirtschaftlichen Aufgaben," Jena, 1898, No. 22 ("Sammlung nationalökonomischer und statistischer Abhandlungen," 21.

Still, there is much that is really new in Luther's views on the State and the rulers which does not come out in the passage quoted above; what is new, however, far from being applauded by modern Protestant judges, is often reprehended by them.

As the accounts we had to give elsewhere were already so full it will not be necessary again to go into details; it is, however, worth while again to emphasise the conclusions already arrived at by calling attention to some data not as yet taken into consideration.

In the first place one thing that was new was the energetic application made by Luther in his earlier years of his peculiar principle of the complete separation of world and Church. The State, or, rather, ordered society (for there was as yet no political State in the modern sense), was consequently de-Christianised by him, at least in principle, at least if we ignore the change which soon took place in Luther himself (see below, p. 576 f.). The proof of this de-Christianisation is found in his own statements. In his writing of 1523, "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," he expressly told the rulers of the land that they had no concern with good people and "that it was not their business to make them pious," but that they were only there to rule a world estranged from God, and to maintain order by force when the peace was disturbed or men suffered injustice. Amongst real Christians there would, according to Luther, be no secular rulers.[1] Even when Luther, in this tract of which he thought so highly, is instructing a pious Christian ruler on his duties, he has nothing to say of his duty to protect and further the Church, though in earlier days all admonitions to the princes had insisted mainly on this.

His view of the two powers at work in the social order was new, particularly as regards the spiritual sphere and the position of those holding authority in the Church. The believing Christians in Luther's eyes formed merely a union of souls,[2] without any hierarchy or a jot of spiritual authority or power; there is in fact only one power on earth qualified to issue regulations, viz. the secular power; the combination of the two powers, which had formed the basis of public order previously, was thrown over, any spiritual ruler being out of place where all the faithful were priests. There is

[1] See above, vol. ii., pp. 297 ff., 307 f. [2] *Ib.*, p. 302 f.

but a "ministry" of the word, conferred by election of the faithful, and its one duty is to bring the Gospel home to souls; it knows nothing of law, vengeance or punishment.[1] The ministry of the Word must indeed stand, but is by no means a supervising body, in spite of the "neo-Lutheran conception of the office," as some Protestant theologians of the present day disapprovingly call it.

Carl Holl, in his "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment" (1911), says with some truth: "Luther knows as little of a Christian State as he does of a Christian shoemaking trade"; "Our life here below is only Christian in so far as the individuals concerned are Christians. Their sphere of action is not prescribed to Christians by Christianity but rather by the divine order of nature."[2]—Hence the whole public congregational system, so far as it needs laws to govern it, must remain on a purely natural basis.

This view is confirmed by the following odd-sounding statements of Luther's:

Among Christians the sword can have no place, "hence you cannot make use of it on or among Christians, who have no need of it"; still the world "cannot and may not do without it" (this power); in other words, as Christians, both subjects and rulers suffer injustice gladly according to the Gospel, but, for the sake of their neighbours and for the keeping of order in the world, both favour the use of force. Secular rule does not extend beyond "life and limb and what is outward on this earth."[3] "Our squires, our princes and our bishops, shall see what fools they are," when they "order us to believe the Church, the Fathers and the Councils though there is no Word of God in them. It is the apostles of the devil who order such things, not the Church." And yet "our Emperor and the clever princes are doing this now."[4] Hence the princes must keep to their own outward sphere, viz. only coerce the wicked, and not seek to rule over Christians.

"Christians can be governed by nothing but the Word of God. For Christians must be ruled by faith, not by outward works. . . . Those who do not believe are not Christians, nor do they belong to the kingdom of Christ, but to the kingdom of the world, hence they must be coerced and driven with the sword and by the outward government. Christians do everything that is good of their own accord and without being compelled, and God's Word is enough for them."[5]

When Luther contrasts in this way the kingdom of Christ and the true life of a Christian with the temporal kingdom and the functions of the authorities, he goes so far in his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," and even in his sermons, as strongly to

[1] Above, p. 58 f. [2] P. 15.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 255; Erl. ed., 22, p. 73.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 262 f. = 82 ff. Cp. p. 269 ff. = 92 ff.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 271 = p. 94.

depreciate the secular or civil power. He teaches, for instance, that the Christian who holds the office of ruler, must do things that are forbidden to Christians as such, for nstance, pronounce sentence, put to death and use other strong measures against the unruly. But all this belongs in reality to hell.—"Whoever is under the secular rule," so we read in a curious sermon in Luther's Church-Postils, "is still far from the kingdom of heaven, for the place where all this belongs is hell; for instance, the prince who governs his people in such a way as to allow none to suffer injustice, and no evildoer to go unrequited, does well and receives praise. . . . Nevertheless, as explained above, this is not appointed for those who belong to heaven but merely in order that people may not sink yet deeper into hell and make things even worse. Therefore no one who is under the secular government can boast that he is acting rightly before God; in His sight it is still all wrong"; for of Christians more is required; whoever wishes to act according to the Gospel must ever be ready to suffer injustice.[1] But the secular authority must, either "of its own initiative or at the instance of others, without any complaint, entreaty or exertion of his, help and protect him. Where it does not he must allow himself to be fleeced and abused, and not resist evil, according to the words of Christ. And be assured that this is no counsel of perfection as our sophists lyingly and blasphemously assert, but a strict command binding on all Christians."[2] There is a huge gulf between the kingdom of such a Christian and that of the "jailers, hangmen, lawyers, advocates and such-like rabble."

Such are the epithets Luther flings at the secular power, the State and its ministers, whose task it is to "seek out the wicked, convict them, strangle and put them to death."[3] These authorities must indeed exist and a Christian must submit to them willingly—not for his own sake but for that of his neighbour, i.e. for the sake of the common good; he himself has no need of them; the behaviour of the Christian towards this secular power must be dictated by his Christian love for his neighbour.

A Protestant critic writes: "Luther hardly recognises any so-called Christian State. . . . We find Luther warning his hearers against seeing anything particularly useful or indispensable behind the work of the government. The ruler's sense of responsibility was to be something purely human. . . . The Christian in fact has no need of any ruler."[4] "Luther's interest

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 281. Cp. Weim. ed., 18, p. 307; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 282.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 259; Erl. ed., 22, p. 78 f. In order to understand the phrase "let himself be fleeced" it should be noted that those Lutherans who lived under the rule of Catholic princes were unable to escape the action of the Edict of Worms.

[3] He here says: "God hangs, breaks on the wheel, strangles and makes war; all this is His work." *Ib.*, 19, p. 626=22, p. 250.

[4] Gustav v. Schulthess-Rechberg, "Luther, Zwingli und Calvin in ihren Ansichten über das Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche," 1909 ("Zürcher Beiträge zur Rechtswissenschaft," 24), p. 168.

in things political (see below) is practically nil ; where the State can be of any use to him he welcomes it and even gives it its meed of praise. . . . His appreciation of the State is usually just a matter of feeling."[1] We come to see that "he took no independent interest in politics. . . . He even goes so far as to characterise the outward order of the State as a necessary evil. State organisation in his eyes is simply a kind of enforced charity towards our neighbour."[2]

"Luther knows no Christian State," says another Protestant writer of Luther's theories. "The State is as worldly a thing as eating and drinking" ; indeed its commands and its deeds "all belong to hell."[3]

This worldly bond of union is good, when, with God's help, it follows the dictates of reason. It is the only union that exists, for Luther does not recognise State and Church as two unions. This, says Holl, is now regarded "as an axiom."[4] We may, it is true, admit with Holl that Luther is not quite consistent in this, but this is only because he reverts inadvertently to the old ideas, and, even in his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," incidentally speaks of a spiritual authority and of bishops in whom it is invested.[5]

Some Protestant writers, quite erroneously, extol the "Christendom" equipped with both spiritual and secular authority which Luther substituted for the twin powers of yore. It was only owing to his want of logic, and out of practical considerations for the interests of his religion (see below), that he was able to endow as he did the State with spiritual authority. And, besides, "Christendom," to which indeed he often enough refers, had, in reality, been completely abrogated by him at least in the traditional sense, viz. of the kingdom of God on earth which embraces as in one family all the baptised. For had he not deprived baptism of its dignity and made membership of the Church dependent on the faith of the adult ?

[1] *Ib.*, p. 57. [2] *Ib.*, 166.

[3] E. Brandenburg, "Luthers Anschauungen vom Staate," 1901, p. 13 f. Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 258 ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 77 f. : "His kingdom [Christ's] is not made up of ploughmen, princes, hangmen or jailers, nor does it include the sword or secular law, but only the Word of God and His Spirit ; by it His subjects are governed in their hearts inwardly." All the successors of the Apostles and "spiritual rulers" were to be satisfied with the Word.—Erl. ed., 39, p. 330 : "The secular government has only to rule over bodily and temporal possessions."—P. 331 : "Whoever wishes to become learned and wise in secular government let him study the heathen books and writings, these have indeed described and painted it most beautifully and fully."

[4] K. Holl, "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment," 1911, p. 20.

[5] See above, vol. ii., p. 301 : The bishops must "restrain heretics."

" Luther drags away the corner stone on which the whole edifice [of Christendom] rests," says Holl. " According to his teaching we are not simply baptised into the Church as was the case according to the Catholic doctrine. Baptism, indeed, even to him, constitutes the foundation of Christianity, but the grace of the sacrament is only effective in those who believe in the promises offered therein (' *Sacramenta non implentur dum fiunt, sed dum creduntur* '). . . . Luther, by making admission into the spiritual society dependent on a personal condition, destroyed the idea of Christendom in the mediæval Catholic sense " ;[1] this Holl regards as his chief merit.

This is undoubtedly so true, that, in the case of the wars against the Turks, Luther refused to hear of any " Christendom " in the traditional sense which might be pitted against the Crescent, and this on the ground that but few of the combatants were real Christians, i.e. real believers in the Evangel he preached.[2] He also reserves the honourable title of Christians, as the headings of many of his writings show, for those who personally professed the new faith.[3]

Was Luther the Founder of the Modern State?

The question seems so extraordinary, that we must hasten to say that some of Luther's more passionate admirers have actually claimed for him that he prepared the way for the modern State.

The difficulty of proving that he is really entitled to such an honour becomes obvious as soon as we recall that all modern theories of government agree in seeing the ideal community in a well-knit body with equal rights and equal

[1] Holl, *ib.*, p. 20 f. Luther's words are from " De capt, babyl.," " Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 533 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 64. Cp " *Nisi hæc adsit aut paretur fides, nihil prodest baptismus imo obest, non solum tum cum suscipitur, sed toto post tempore vitæ.*" *Ib.*, p. 527 f. = 57. Cp. above, vol. iv., p. 487.

[2] " He protests against the war with the Turks being carried on under the pretext of Christianity, ' as though our people could be termed an army of Christians fighting the Turks,' when in ' the whole army there are perhaps barely five Christians [real Lutheran believers].' . . . Thus he deliberately calls into question the Christianity of the German people and hence demands that the war should be undertaken as a merely secular thing." Holl, *ib.*, p. 22, with a reference to " Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 37, and to a letter to Spalatin, Dec. 21, 1518, " Briefwechsel," 1, p. 333. Cp. above, p. 402, and vol. iii., p. 77 ff.

[3] Above, vol. ii., p. 108.

liberties for all, religious freedom included. The same standard of justice applies without exception to every citizen and all religions (such at least is the programme) are esteemed alike; moreover, to this standard of justice, all, even the monarch or the supreme representative of the republic, must bow, seeing that the heads of the State have ceased to be absolute.

But what, according to Luther's theory and practice, was the position of the Lutheran ruler in respect of his civil and religious authority? How did it stand with the freedom and independence of his subjects, particularly where different religious practices co-existed?

It is true that, taking his instructions to the rulers just discussed, which he derived from his principle of the separation of Church and world, we should expect him to recognise freedom of conscience. The instructions, however, though seemingly addressed to all, sprang from his opposition to the Catholic rulers. The latter, particularly in the infancy of Protestantism, were above all to be urged to grant entire liberty and not to trouble about religion; what Luther wished to impress upon them was that they had no right to interfere with the Lutheran movement within their jurisdiction.[1]

Luther spoke quite otherwise when dealing with princes who were favourable to his preaching, or who had introduced the new religious system. In proportion as the rulers and municipalities that favoured his cause grew more numerous, he came to confer on them full powers to stamp out the Catholic faith, and even made it their duty so to do. He also perceived all too well the extent to which zealous Protestant princes, such as Johann of Saxony and Philip of Hesse, could further his innovations. From that time forward he promoted the growing authority of the sovereigns over the Churches, above all by warmly defending the principle that in every country uniformity of worship and doctrine must prevail, short of which there would always be "revolts and sects," as he said in 1526.[2]

This was, however, to destroy the main groundwork of the modern State theory, viz. the personal freedom of the

[1] See our examination of the "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt" in vol. ii., pp. 297–306.

[2] The passages are cited below, p. 577, n. 2.

individual. It was to interfere with the evenness of justice and with the sacred right of conscience. What other rights of the subject would the sovereign regard as sacred once the door had been opened to arbitrary action in the domain of religious practice ?[1]

The argument with which Luther conceals his selfish aim of securing new fields for his own religious system, and veils the real motive of his struggle against Popery, is deserving of special attention in spite of all its frivolity.

According to Luther's new modification of his views each locality was to have but one form of worship. Any divergency in preaching or worship must always sow the seeds of dissension, revolt and mob-law ; the authorities ought not to permit such a state of things if they valued the preservation of order ; so as to insure uniformity of preaching and worship dissenting preachers must be removed. It was for this reason that the inhabitants of Nuremberg had "silenced their monks and shut up their monasteries."[2] In this way, encouraged by the wisdom of a "prudent" town-council, which did not look beyond the city walls, Luther came to make his notorious request to his sovereign, viz. that Catholics who remained true to their faith should be banished from the country ; for "madcaps," who refuse to take the proposed arrangement in good part and in the spirit of Christian charity, are not to be suffered among Christians but must be swept away like "chaff from the threshing floor."[3] As though the secular power had not even then ample means at its disposal for checking or punishing any real disturbance of the peace on the part of a congregation. At the present day we can afford to smile at the strange reason assigned for measures so far-reaching against innocent citizens of the State ; the assertion

[1] Luther's answer to the question he raises, "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 207, in the Table-Talk : "Whether it be lawful to kill a tyrant, who at his own pleasure acts contrary to right and justice" is aimed at absolutism. He replies confidently : Yes, where the latter really oppresses his subjects by crying deeds of wrong and where the "citizens and subjects unite together" to make an end of him as they would of any "other murderer or highwayman." In his "Ob Kriegsleutte auch ynn seligen Stande seyn künden," 1526, Luther does not sanction private revenge nor any disorderly or violent action on the part of the mob, "whereby the people rise and depose their lord or strangle him." He emphasises in this passage as the reason the absence of legal proceedings : "It does not do to pipe too much to the mob, or it will only too readily lose its head." "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 635 ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 259.

[2] To the Elector Johann, Feb. 9, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 368 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 318), on the introduction of Lutheranism into Altenburg. Cp. vol. ii., p. 315 f. ; the principal reason why the ruler was to intervene was, that he might not deliberately tolerate "idolatry."

[3] Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 200 ; Erl. ed., 23, p. 9. Luther's preface to the Instructions of the Visitors, 1528.

that difference of worship gives rise to unendurable discord sounds ridiculous to one used to the principles of liberty paramount in the civilised States of to-day. At any rate, this dictum did not make of Luther the founder of the modern State.

In strange contrast with the modern ideas of justice is the excuse he brings forward to vindicate the violent conversion to Protestantism so often practised by the magistrates or petty rulers in their own territories. "What is done by the regular authorities is not to be regarded as revolt."[1] Is it really a fact that subversion and violence cease to be wrong when practised by the regular authorities? The modern State—in theory at any rate—recognises no such principle.

It must be added, that both Luther and the princes devoted to him were fond of declaring that the really Christian rulers were bound to put an end to insults and blasphemies against God, regardless of any disturbance of civil life which might ensue. Luther made a beginning by exhorting the sovereign and the congregation to abolish the Mass at Wittenberg which, like Catholic worship in general, was a perpetual blasphemy of God. "The regular authorities" must rise up against "such blasphemy." The scandal given being public, no indulgence was to be shown by Christians.[2] Eventually every false doctrine was accounted a public scandal, i.e. every opinion expressed in writings or sermons which deviated from the true Evangel. "It is the duty" of the authorities, he says, "to punish public blasphemers . . . and in the same way they should punish, or at least not brook, those who teach that Christ did not die for our sins, but that each one must make satisfaction for himself."[3] This, according to him, was notoriously the teaching of the Catholics.

But if the Papists and the Lutherans as they are called, "preach against each other in a parish, town or district" and neither party will yield, "then let the authorities step in and try the case, and whichever party does not agree with Scripture, let him be ordered to hold his tongue."[4] Thus the official delegated by the prince—where the prince himself was loath to take the chair—is to decide which is the true meaning of the Bible, and which party really conforms to it.

How opposed this was to the ground principles of the modern State it is scarcely necessary to point out here. The freedom

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 679; Erl. ed., 22, p. 48. "Eyn trew Vormanung . . . sich zu vorhuten fur Auffruhr und Emporung," 1522. In connection with this the author says: It is not lawful for the individual to rebel against "Endchrist," i.e. the Papacy, and to make use of force, but the secular authorities and the nobles "ought from a sense of duty to use their regular authority for this purpose, each prince and ruler in his own land," etc. This he wrote on the eve of composing his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," according to which the prince was not to trouble at all about the religion of his country.

[2] Above, vol. ii., p. 88 f.; vol. iv., p. 510 f. N. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16. Jahrh.," 1911, p. 7 ff.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 250 f. [4] *Ib.*, p. 252.

postulated by the latter was absolutely unknown to Luther ; had his mind ever risen to such heights he would never have proposed the farcical Bible examination to be held by the authorities.

The relation between such demands as these and Luther's own former attitude has not escaped the censure of Protestant writers. " Luther here contradicts himself," remarks Drews ;[1] " as late as 1524 he had said that men must be allowed to disagree, and a year later that the authorities have no right to prevent every man from ' teaching and believing whatever he wished, whether it be Gospel or lie ' ; it was sufficient if they checked the preaching of rebellion and any disturbance of the peace."[2]

The Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony adopted the view that uniformity of doctrine was called for. He would, so he declared, " recognise or tolerate no sects or divisions in his lands or principalities," in order the better " to prevent harmful revolt and other unrighteousness." But at the same time he assured his subjects that it was not his intention to " prescribe to anyone what he should hold or believe."[3]

The Prince as Absolute Patriarch

Things drifted, thanks to Luther's own action, slowly but surely towards an entire control of the Church by the State. Luther knew of no better means of stimulating the Evangelical rulers to take action in ecclesiastical things than by setting up before them the example of King David.

He describes in 1534, in his exposition of Psalm ci. (c.),[4] how, in order to exterminate false doctrine, David " made a visitation of the whole of his kingdom." " He always checked any public inroads of heresy. For the devil never idles or sleeps, hence neither must the spiritual authorities be idle or slumber." " Oh what a great number of false teachers, idolaters and heretics was he not obliged to expel, or in other ways stop their mouths. . . . The true teachers on the other hand he had everywhere sought out, promoted, called, appointed and commanded to preach the Word of God purely and simply. . . . He himself diligently instituted, ordered and appointed true teachers everywhere, himself writing Psalms in which he points out how they are to teach and praise God." " David in this was a pattern and masterpiece to all pious kings and lords . . . showing them how they must not allow wicked men to lead souls astray."[5] " I say again, let whoever can, be another David and follow his example, more particularly the princes and lords."[6] David, so he continues later, led

[1] Paul Drews, " Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers ? " (" Zeitschr. für Theol. and Kirche," 1908, Ergänzungsheft), p. 99. Cp. p. 90.

[2] Cp. Luther's statements, in Paulus, *loc. cit.*, p. 25 ff.

[3] Drews, *ib.*, p. 100.

[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 313 ff.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 320.

[6] P. 323.

" pious kings and princes rightly and in a Christian manner to the churches," but he was also a " model in secular government," which " can have its own rule apart from the kingdom of God " ; to this all Popish princes should restrict themselves and not try to instruct Christ how to rule His Church and spiritual realm.[1]

Hence all that he had once written quite generally of the separation of the kingdom of God with " its own rule " from the " worldly government " was in fact, as he now says more outspokenly, only to apply to the " false priestlings," and their princes.

But when according to David's example a Lutheran preacher " by virtue of his office," or a Lutheran prince, demanded the suppression of the false teaching, this " spiritual rule is nothing more than a service offered to God's own supremacy " ; the Lutheran prince is not thereby intruding on the " spiritual or divine authority but remains humbly submissive to it and its servant."

" For, when directed towards God and the service of His Sovereignty, everything must be equal and made to intermingle, whether it be termed spiritual or secular." " Thus they must be united in the same obedience and kneaded together as it were in one cake."[2]—It is hardly possible to believe our eyes when we meet with such phrases coming from the same pen that had formerly so strongly championed the complete sundering of the spiritual from the temporal. Yet Luther even seeks to justify the contradiction on more serious grounds. When it was a case of the true Word of God and of the Evangel, then matters stood quite otherwise.

" The secular and spiritual government " are most improperly confused, so he declares, when " spiritual or secular princes and lords seek to change and control the Word of God and to lay down what is to be taught or preached " ; here he is referring to the non-Lutheran authorities. Quite a different thing is it " when David concerns himself with the divine or spiritual government," and really restores God's glory. Had David said : " My good people, act differently from what God has taught you," then this would indeed have spelt a " confusion of the spiritual and temporal, of the divine and human government "—such as Luther's opponents are now guilty of. But David, the servant of God and pattern of all pious princes and kings, because he acted otherwise, was adorned with such high and kingly virtues even in his temporal government that it must have been the work of God, i.e. His peculiar grace ; but this same grace is with all pious princes in order that, under their sway and in spite of the hatred of the devil, the temporal rule and " God's own Rule " may prosper. Supported by such grace David could say of the two authorities he combined : " I suffer neither ungodly men in the spiritual domain nor yet evildoers in the temporal."[3]

[1] P. 324 f. [2] P. 327 f. [3] P. 358 f.

Thus, in the hands of a pious Evangelical prince, the co-existence of these two rules involves no disturbance of order. And they may all the more readily be put into the hand of one who serves God according to His "Word" seeing that there is in reality but a single power; according to Luther, the hierarchy having been destroyed, there was no one holding spiritual authority; as for the semblance of spiritual authority which the congregation had once possessed it had willingly resigned it into the hands of the Christian David on the princely throne. There is but one authority that embraces everything temporal and spiritual and that works in the two "governments" (read: spheres of life), i.e. in the temporal life of the subjects, which is founded on reason and earthly laws, and in the spiritual domain to which the Gospel lifts them up. In both orders man is admonished to obedience towards God by the pious ruler who regulates everything either himself or by means of the preachers.

Thus Luther's conception of the State finally grows into a kind of theocracy.

The theocracy of the Israelites is therefore held up to the rulers in the example not only of David but also of the other pious Jewish kings. In the political sphere Old Testament imagery exercised far too great an influence on Luther and his arbitrary new creations. How widely different from the Jewish theocracy was it to see the Father of the country made the highest authority not merely on practical questions of Church government but even on differences concerning faith? The "absolute patriarch"[1] at Luther's express demand drives his negligent or reluctant subjects to hear the preachers; on him depends the introduction and use of the greater excommunication, should this weapon ever become necessary; he removes from their posts those professors of the theological or other faculties who oppose the ruling faith, just as he makes his authority felt on the preacher who forsakes the right path. He is, according to Luther, the chief guardian of the young and of all who need his protection, in order, that, where his subjects do not take thought for their salvation and act accordingly, he may "force them to do so, in the same way as he obliges

[1] The expression is H. Boehmer's ("Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[1]) 1906, p. 135.

them to give their services for the repair of bridges, roads and ways, or to render such other services as their country may require."[1]

On one occasion Luther points out, that in the past, the Pope of Rome had been all in all. Now it is the sovereign of the land, who, as God's own Vicar, is all in all.

Thus we have here, writes Frank Ward in his "Darstellung der Ansichten Luthers vom Staat," "almost the counterpart of the old ecclesiastical absolutism, seeing that all ecclesiastical functions and conditions so far as they belong to the outward domain are put under the State."[2] Instead of its being "almost the counterpart," it would be better to say that it was an absolute caricature of the supposed ecclesiastical absolutism of the past. Ward, however, goes on to say that in the chapter in question he had only shown how, "Luther gave the State an independent dignity and position, and how he had enlarged and strengthened its claims."

In direct contrast to those writers who see in Luther's political theory the foundation of the modern State, is a recent statement of Heinrich Boehmer's.

"Luther's political and social views," says this author,[3] "are in every essential point quite mediæval, antiquated and unmodern. People speak of 'Luther's views' or even of 'Luther's teaching on the State and society.' But it would be better to refrain from using such terms which can only serve to arouse false expectations. As little as the reformer was familiar with the words state and society, so little did he know their meaning. For no State or society in the modern sense of the word existed at the time in central or northern Germany, but merely a large number of bodies somewhat resembling States, all of which, however, fell far short of the ideal of a State." He goes on to explain, that, for this reason, Luther always speaks to the "authorities," they being in his eyes the most potent factor in the political organisations he knew; yet, in determining their duties, "his mind moves on quite mediæval lines"; "in the matter of political theory he is far behind even Thomas of Aquin, for Thomas had, in the Italian cities, an example of a far more highly developed State, whilst in the school of Aristotle he had made acquaintance with a number of political ideas and views which had led him to a very thorough study of politics." Boehmer points out that, according to Luther, the Natural Law upbears the outward order with which alone he was conversant—viz. the

[1] To the Elector Johann, Nov. 22, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p.387 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406). [2] P. 17.

[3] "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[2] p. 164.

landed-aristocratic society which predominated at the time of the reformation—until it came to appear as almost a divine institution, any attempt to overthrow which amounted to a crime, "a view which indeed explains much of the success of Lutheranism, but which is anything but modern."[1]

Luther's "Patriarchal theory," according to H. Boehmer, had an even greater influence on the political conditions of Lutheran countries than his other theory of the rights of the nobility. The princes within the domain of the new church system entered eagerly into the theory of their supposed paternal rights and finally built it out into a quite insufferable absolutism. Such an undue growth of the secular power was the more to be feared seeing that any independent spiritual power, which might, as in the Middle Ages, have served as a counterweight, no longer existed, having been swallowed up in the authority of the prince. Everything had indeed been secularised, and, to the Lutheran ruler, as God's own representative, it now was left to direct the religious and temporal concerns of the population on the lines laid down in the Bible.

"The Lutheran prince," says Boehmer, "as father of the country, undertook to provide for his subjects in every department of life; his rule was absolute, though indeed patriarchal, an ideal of the State quite in accordance with Luther's views."[2]

"Any separation or division of Church and State Luther neither recognised nor desired," now that he had invested the Evangelical princes with the supreme episcopate.[3]

The term "Zwangskultur," often used of the absolutism obtaining in the Lutheran order of society, is not altogether incorrect, in spite of the protests of Protestant theologians. Other Protestant authors find a parallel between Luther's view of the State and certain late mediæval ones; both, according to them, have been influenced by humanism, with its Cæsarean conception of unfreedom, and by theocratic absolutism.

Carl Sell notes how the Reformation, "in its own way, put new life into the mediæval idea of a new theocracy." "How deeply the theocratical idea was rooted in the Protestant State-system may be seen from the time it took before the States would consent to surrender their religious character."[4]

After the Reformation, says G. Steinhausen, "the theological spirit more than ever laid hold of the world and mankind and fettered the ardent longing for freedom. Herein lies the chief harm wrought by the Reformation."[5]

"It was the Reformation," so O. Gierke says, "that brought

[1] *Ib.*, p. 166; 1st ed., p. 135. [2] 1st ed., p. 135.

[3] Frank Ward, "Darstellung der Ansichten Luthers vom Staat," p. 15. On p. 17, he says that according to Luther "all ecclesiastical functions and relations, in so far as they concern external things, are subject to the State."

[4] "Der Zusammenhang von Reformation und politischer Freiheit" in "Theol. Arbeiten aus dem rhein.-wissensch. Predigerverein, N.F.," Hft. 12, Tübingen, 1910, p. 47 f.

[5] "Gesch. der deutschen Kultur," Leipzig, 1904, p, 504.

about the energetic revival of the theocratic ideal. In spite of all their differences Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli and Calvin agree in emphasising the Christian call, and, consequently, the divine right of the secular authority. Indeed, on the one hand by subordinating the Church more or less to the State, and on the other by making the State's authority dependent on its fulfilling its religious duties, they give to the Pauline dictum ' All authority comes from God ' a far wider scope than it had ever had before."[1]

Luther's Real Merit and his Claims

If anyone ever really believed that the modern State was in any way embodied in Luther's ideal or that he paved the way for it, the easiest way to disprove such an assumption would be to show that the most essential feature of the modern State is entirely wanting in the Lutheran, patriarchal one, viz. freedom and the political co-operation of the people, and, above all, the vital atmosphere of personal and corporate independence in religious matters.

In point of fact the most that can be argued is that Luther to some extent, though in an entirely negative way, paved the road for the modern conception of the State.

This he did by his relentless opposition to the Church, which had so long held sway. As early as the days of Boniface VIII attempts had been made to curtail her action in politics. The efforts of some of the Catholic sovereigns, who, without denying the inherent rights of the spiritual authority, laboured to establish State-Churches also tended in the same direction. Luther was, however, the first who sought to destroy all ecclesiastical authority, as a mere symbol of Antichrist. Hence, for those rulers who took his part, one of the chief obstacles that had withstood the growth of modern conditions was swept away. Nevertheless, wellnigh three hundred years, full of gloomy experiences, had to elapse before a way could be found out of the new labyrinth of despotism, indolence and disorder; and, all this while, the theocratic patriarch of Lutheranism almost invariably stood as an obstacle in the way of development.

Frank Ward may indeed assert, that it is possible "to appeal at least to the spirit of his theory of the State, if not to its every detail."[2] This, however, is only possible if by

[1] "Joh. Althusius und die Entwicklung der naturrechtlichen Staatstheorie," [2] Breslau, 1902, p. 64 f. Paulus, *ib.*, p. 349.

[2] *Ib.*

"its spirit" we understand not what was new but the old, wholesome, traditional elements which Luther retained, i.e. the political ideas handed down by antiquity and the Christian philosophy of the past, on which he so skilfully impressed his own drastic touch. To these olden elements Luther was, however, scarcely fair.

According to what he says and reiterates there had devolved on him alone the incredibly onerous task of finding a way out of the gruesome darkness into which the relations between prince and hierarchy, State and Church, spiritual and temporal order had been plunged in the past: "This is how things stood then. No one had heard or taught, nor did anyone know anything concerning the secular authority, whence it came, what its office or work was, or how it should serve God. The most learned men —I will not name them—looked upon the secular power as a heathen, human and ungodly thing, as a state dangerous to salvation. . . . In short princes and lords, even such as wished to be pious, regarded their station and office as of no account. . . . Thus the Pope and the clergy were at that time all in all, over all and in all, like a very god in the world, and the secular power lay unknown and uncared for in the darkness."[1]

Yet he himself had abased the authorities by reducing them in his writing of 1523 to the position of "jailers and hangmen," working in a domain foreign to all that was spiritual.[2] This, of course, was at a time when he had not as yet found patrons amongst the rulers as he was to do later. According to him, those who wielded the secular power, i.e. the princes, were no Christians. In 1522 he complains of the princes to whom he had appealed in vain: "Now they let everything go and one stands in the way of the other. Some even help and further the cause of Antichrist. They are at loggerheads and do not show themselves at all willing to help matters on."[3] Thus, according to him, Christ is left to Himself; but "He is the Lord of life and death. . . . Together with Him we too shall conquer and despise even the princes."[4] "God Himself will shortly make an end of Popery by His Word. . . . A new Church will arise but not by the doing of the princes but of those in whom the Word of God has really taken root."[5] Luther then wished, as we have already shown, to bring about the establishment of a Congregational Church; later on he even

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 109; Erl. ed., 31, p. 34 f.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 297 f., from the writing, "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt."

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 680; Erl. ed., 22, p. 48 f. Cp. letter to the Elector Frederick, March 7, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 111 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).

[4] To Wenceslaus Link, March 19, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 315. "*Ipsos principes vincemus et contemnemus.*"

[5] Words of P. Drews, "Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" p. 28.

dreamed of assembling together only the true believers. As, however, the Congregational Churches did not thrive and as it proved impossible to carry out the scheme of a Church apart, he allowed the State to intervene, and, with its help, there came the National Church; this soon grew into a State-Church with the sovereign at its head.

Luther still remained, however, the great teacher. He continued to vaunt his ambiguous "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt." In 1529 he even related how Duke Frederick had caused this writing to be copied and "specially bound; he was very fond of it because it showed him what his position was."[1] In 1533, looking back on the whole of his writings concerning the authorities he says: "In Popery such views of the secular power lay under the bench"; "since the time of the Apostles no doctor or scribe" has instructed the worldly estates so "well and outspokenly" as he, not even "Ambrose and Augustine."[2]

We may here recall the sober and perfectly true remark of Fr. v. Bezold. Luther may have plumed himself on having been the first to revive a right understanding of and respect for the secular authority, but that "the indefensibility of this and similar claims has long since been demonstrated."[3]

Luther's error is evident, though unfortunately not to all, as we can convince ourselves by reading the eulogies of Luther which are still so common under the pen of Protestant writers; for instance, that Luther had "deepened Augustine's view of the State"; that he was ever moving forward "in a straight line," expanding and perfecting the knowledge already acquired; and that even in his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt" "he was already at his best," etc.

It may, therefore, be all the more useful to look a little more closely into one side of the present subject which has not yet been dealt with but which leads to interesting disclosures, viz. into the question of the various circumstances, some outward, some inward and personal, which led Luther to evolve his theory of the patriarchal, absolutist State. Here the Visitation of 1527–28 stands out as a milestone on the road of his development.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 109; Erl. ed., 31, p. 35.

[2] *Ib.*, Erl. ed., 31, p. 236, "Verantwortung der auffgelegten Auffrur." See vol. ii., p. 294. Cp. *ib.*, Weim. ed., 19, p. 625; Erl. ed., 22, p. 248, where he says, already in 1526, in the writing "Ob Kriegsleutte," etc.: "So that I should like to boast that, since the time of the Apostles, the secular sword and authority has never been so clearly and grandly described and extolled as by me, as even my foes must admit."

[3] See vol. ii., p. 295, n. 1.

Other Factors which assisted in the Establishment of the State-Church

It was a common phenomenon in all the earlier struggles against the ecclesiastical hierarchy for the separatists to seek for support and assistance from the secular power and the State. From the time of the earliest controversies in the Church this tendency had been noticed among those who broke away. Luther too, from the time of his first public rupture, had cast his eyes on the secular power; nay, even earlier, in his Commentary on Romans, he betrays a tendency to put the secular before the spiritual.[1]

To these ideas he gave full play in the call to reform the Church which he addressed "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation."

For the next few years, however, the ideas are less to the fore. Luther was very well aware that a quiet and gradual procedure would appeal far more to the then Elector, Frederick the Wise, than any urging on of the innovations at high pressure and with State interference. The Elector was in fact so averse to taking any strong measures, that on the contrary he frequently impressed on the Wittenberg leaders the need there was for caution.

Matters assumed another aspect, when, in 1525, there came a change of ruler. The Elector Johann of Saxony was a zealous friend of Luther's and soon became the real patron of Lutheranism. His attitude towards the innovations, taken with Luther's new tendencies, constituted a prime factor in the rise of a State-governed Church.

Another factor was the condition of the Lutheran congregations which had so far sprung up. They were scattered and devoid of organisation. Not seldom they bore within them seeds of dissension born as they had been out of quarrels within the parishes, and maintained for the most part only by the violent action of a majority of the council. The petty rulers naturally sought to link themselves up with the greater powers so as to maintain both the ecclesiastical innovations and their newly acquired rights. The sovereign was a pillar of strength on whom they leaned, when in doubt, when it was a question of defending the preachers they had

[1] Cp. above, vol. i., p. 284 f.

appointed, of removing persons they regarded with disfavour, or of allaying disputes amongst the burghers.

To all this, however, must be added a further circumstance which contributed to bring about the State supremacy of a later date, viz, the corruption of many of the newly formed congregations, a corruption which urgently called for a strong hand and adequate means of coercion. "When, after the Peasant War," writes Carl Müller, "the dreadful decline in things ecclesiastical made itself felt, the parsonages and schools threatening to fall into ruins and the agricultural population to relapse into savagery, the time arrived for the rulers of the land to come into greater prominence. It was now no longer a question of individual congregations but rather of the whole country, and above all of the rising generation."[1]

The intervention of the prince subsequent to the victory over the peasants in 1525 also greatly promoted the increased devotion with which men of influence, Luther included, attached themselves to the authority of the ruler as a bulwark against revolution. The arrogance of the country folk had to be broken by strengthening the power of the sovereign; this Luther repeated so often and so loudly that his foes began to call him a footlicker of the princes.

Significance of the Visitation and Inquisition held in the Saxon Electorate

The decisive importance, for the inward development of the new Church system and for Luther's position, of the Visitation of the churches of the Saxon Electorate held in 1528 has already been pointed out cursorily.[2] The Visitation brought to a head a growth which had long been in process. The princely supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs which then came about and was formally sanctioned in Saxony became, with Luther's consent, which was partly given freely, partly wrung from him, something permanent in the birthplace of the new Church, the Visitations continuing to be carried out in the same way by the prince of the land. Saxony provided a model which was gradually followed in other districts

[1] "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," Tübingen, 1910, p. 63.

[2] Above, p. 140 ff.; vol. ii., p. 332 f.

where Lutheranism prevailed, while the then tendency to strengthen the reigning houses so as to enable them to hold their own against Emperor and Empire also exercised a powerful influence.

The Electoral Visitation which Luther had counselled and to which he most zealously lent his help, had for its aim, according to his own words, which we must take in their most literal sense, "the constituting of the churches" because "everything is now so mangled."[1] So much did he expect from it that he even expressed the hope that it would clear up for the future the whole problem of the new "Church" and its organisation, which, strange to say, he had never seen fit to think out theoretically. As a matter of fact it was "cleared up," and that by the very programme for the Visitation issued by the Court. What was to be instituted was to be neither a Church apart, nor a number of free Congregational Churches, nor a great independent National Church, but a State Establishment, a compulsory Church in fact, though calling itself a National Church upheld by the charity of the State.[2]

We have the programme of the Visitation in the three documents which follow in chronological order, the "Instructions" for the Visitors themselves issued by the Elector on June 16, 1527,[3] the "Instructions of the Visitors addressed to the ministers of the Saxon Electorate" and the Preface to the same which Luther composed, both of which appeared in print together in March, 1528.[4]

It can scarcely be doubted that Luther had a hand in the drafting of the Electoral Instructions, which form a sort of Magna Charta of princely supremacy in Church matters. All his previous written communications with the Court had been tending towards this end. In his earliest efforts to bring about the Visitation he had told the ruler that it pertained to his "office" to see that the Evangelical workers

[1] To Nicholas Hausmann, Jan. 10, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 10: "*constitutis ecclesiis . . . laceris autem ita rebus*," etc. Only after the Churches had been constituted could the ban be introduced as his friend wished.—For earlier Visitations see "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 176 ff. [2] See above, p. 140 ff, and vol. iii., p. 28 ff.

[3] Printed in E. Sehling, "Die evangel. Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrh.," 1, 1902, p. 142 ff., and, before this, by A. E. Richter, "Die evangel. Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrh.," 1, 1846, p. 77 ff.

[4] Both in Luther's Works, Weim. ed., 26, p. 195 ff., and Erl. ed., 23, p. 1 ff.

were remunerated, that, into his hands "as the supreme head" had fallen "all the monasteries and foundations" and, with them, the "duty and obligation of seeing into a matter in which no one else could or had a right to interfere." "Not God's command alone but our own needs require that some step should here be taken." Thus he demands that the prince, by virtue of his own authority as "one appointed by God for the matter and empowered to act," should nominate four persons as Visitors, who by his "orders should arrange for the erection and support of schools and parsonages where this was wanted"; of these persons, two were to attend to the material needs, and two who had had a theological training were to examine into the doctrine, preaching and performance of spiritual duties.[1]

Such were the "principles which were eventually carried into practice. For ages after, the Lutheran sovereigns asserted their right to draw up rules concerning the doctrine and constitution of their National Churches, and, to this end, not only laid claim to the old ecclesiastical revenues but also to the right to levy special taxes on their subjects."[2]

Luther was moved to take up his new standpoint not merely by the needs of the day but also by pious Lutherans, such as Nicholas Hausmann, the pastor of Zwickau, who by examples taken from the Bible had pointed out to the Elector himself what his rights and duties were in this field;[3] an even stronger influence was, maybe, exerted on him by the lawyers of the Court, who were intent on making the most of the rights of the sovereign, especially by Chancellor Brück, their spokesman, with whom Luther was brought into closer contact when seeking to remedy the existing distress. He himself, as we shall see, hesitated a little about entering upon this new course. The supremacy of the prince nevertheless seemed inevitably called for by the secularisation of Church property, also for the appointment and payment of the pastors, for the removal of incapable

[1] Nov. 22, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 386 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406). Enders says of this work: "Almost all the proposals Luther makes here with the object of stimulating the project of a Visitation which had come to a standstill are again found in the Instructions to the Visitors." From Luther's previous letters Müller proves that he approved the Instructions, *ib.*, p. 69 ff.

[2] Thus the Weimar editors in their Introduction to the "Instructions of the Visitors," "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 179.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 177.

preachers and those who excited the mob,—especially those of "fanatic" inclinations—and, lastly, for the final and violent uprooting of Catholic worship where it still lingered.

A Visitation was begun in the Electorate in Feb., 1527, by a very characteristic commission appointed by the sovereign assisted by the University of Wittenberg; it was composed of the following members: the lawyer, Hieronymus Schurff, the two noblemen Hans von der Planitz and Asmus von Haubitz, and Melanchthon. The Electoral Instructions of June, 1527, referred to above were the result of previous experience, and had the approval of both Luther and Melanchthon. The practical experience already gained also proved useful in the drawing up of the "Unterricht der Visitatorn an die Pharhern" which was of a more theological and practical character. It is almost entirely the work of Melanchthon, though it was formally approved and accepted by Luther after some slight alterations. It was sent to Luther by the Elector, who had carefully gone into its details, and who directed him to look through it and also write an historical preface ("narration") to it, though the work as a whole was to appear to come from the Court. In due time both the "Instructions" and the Preface were sent to the press by the Elector.

What had transpired of the contents of the "Unterricht" had already aroused considerable opposition within the Lutheran camp; it was displeasing to the zealots to find Melanchthon again returning half-way to the Catholic doctrine in the matter of penance, free-will and good works. They openly declared that official Lutheranism was "slinking back." After its appearance further criticism was aroused among both Protestants and Catholics. Of the Catholic writers, Cochlæus ironically drew attention in his "*Lutherus septiceps*" to the withdrawal that had taken place from Luther's former crass assertions. He also incidentally describes the strange appearance of the State Visitors: "Here comes the Visitor wearing a new kind of mitre, setting up a new form of Papacy, prescribing new laws for divine worship, and reviving what had long since fallen into disuse and dragging it forth into the light once more."[1] Joachim von der Heyden in his printed letter to

[1] In the Preface to the reader: "*Visitator nova mitra infulatur, novum ambiens papatum,*" etc.

Catherine Bora even declared, that, in the rules for the Visitation, Luther "had resumed the Imperial rights," which he had "for a while discarded." He is referring to certain of the rules dealing with Church property, which were to Luther's personal interest.[1]

The Elector's Instruction to the Visitors themselves is, however, of even greater importance in the history of the rise of the Lutheran State Church.

"In this Instruction, not only do we meet everywhere with traces of Luther's wishes," but it also follows him "in applying the property of monasteries and pious foundations to the support of the churches and schools. In all this, true to Luther's ideas, it sees the duty of the sovereign who constitutes the Christian authority."[2]

In this Instruction the attitude adopted by the Elector with regard to doctrine is, that, in view of the Word of God,[3] he, the supreme lord, is not free to brook the practice of false worship and the teaching of false dogma in his lands. What the true doctrine really is, is taken for granted as known, though it is never expressly stated. On the other hand, in the Preface to the "Unterricht," Luther tells, how, "now, by the unspeakable grace of God the Gospel has mercifully been brought back to us once more, or, rather, has dawned on us for the first time."[4] It was the duty of the sovereign, so the Instruction says, to abolish public scandals and hence to remove unworthy clerics. He must proclaim the Gospel to his subjects by means of those called to do so, and admonish them through the Visitors to take the same to heart. The congregations must, when necessary, assist in supporting the preachers. The Visitors had the right to insist in the sovereign's name on the contributions called for by the law, and into their hands the Elector committed the management of the Church property.

The ruler must take steps, as the divinely appointed authority, in obedience to the Word of God, and in the interests of his country to abolish the remnants of Popish error by means of a Visitation. Those ministers who were papistically inclined were simply to be removed and all the preachers "who advocate, preach or hold any erroneous doctrine are to be told to quit our lands in all haste and also, that, should they return, they will be severely dealt with." Whoever refuses to abide by the regulations of the sovereign in the dispensing of the sacraments, is to leave the Electorate. For, "though it is not our intention to

[1] Aug. 10, 1528, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 337.

[2] Words of K. Müller, "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," p. 71 f. He also gives a survey of the Instructions.

[3] For the text see Sehling, *ib.*, p. 143.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 197; Erl. ed., 23, p. 5.

prescribe to anyone what he is to hold or believe, yet we will not tolerate any sect or division in our principality in order to prevent harmful revolt and other mischief."[1]

Thus a formal "Inquisition" was introduced, even to the very name, which was to be undertaken by the Visitors in respect not merely of the clergy but even of the laity, attention being paid to the information laid before the Visitors by the officials and members of the nobility. Any layman who refused to desist from his "error" when summoned to do so was obliged within a certain term to sell out and leave the country "with a warning of being severely dealt with" similar to that addressed to clergymen.

Hence by means of this "Instruction" the foundation was laid for the State supremacy in religious matters. "Spalatin's wish was now fulfilled," says N. Paulus; "the sovereign had now put the 'Christian bit' in the mouth of all the clergy, and they could now preach nothing else than the Lutheran doctrine."[2] "Oh, what a noble work it would be," Spalatin had written in 1525, when first proposing such a use of the 'bit,' "and what great good would result for the whole of Christendom."[3] "Spalatin's pious wish," drily remarks Th. Kolde, "was to be more thoroughly realised than probably he bargained for."[4]

Luther himself was pleased with the Instructions. He never ventured to bring forward any real objection against it, greatly as the document ran counter to his earlier principles; after the appearance of the "Unterricht" addressed to the pastors, headed by Luther's remarkable preface, it was once more printed without any protest. Yet the Preface bears witness to his misgivings.

Luther's Misgivings in the Preface to the Visitors' Directions

The standpoint taken up by the Wittenberg Professor in his Preface to the "Unterricht" is so curious that it has even been said that a "manifest contradiction" exists between it and the Instructions which follow.[5]

[1] Müller, *ib.*, p. 67. N. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz," p. 14. [2] *Ib.*

[3] See Th. Kolde, "Friedrich der Weise," 1881, p. 69 f.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 38.

[5] Carl Holl, "Luther und das Landesherrliche Kirchenregiment" ("1 Ergänzungsheft zur Zeitschr. für Theol. und Kirche"), Tübingen, 1911, p. 54, against C. Müller, "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach

In it, albeit cautiously, he made certain reservations, which show that the absolutist system of Church government proposed by the Prince did not really appeal to him. It is clear he did not feel quite at ease about the Instructions, because of his former advocacy of the independence of the congregations in ecclesiastical matters, because of the future subserviency of Church to State and because the directions were at variance with honest convictions deeply rooted in his mind from the days of his youth. At the same time his misgivings are expressed only with the greatest restraint.

He says: "Although His Electoral Highness is not commanded to teach and to exercise a spiritual rule, yet it is his duty as the secular authority to insist that no dissensions, factions and revolt take place among his subjects"; for which reason too the Emperor Constantine had exhorted the Christians to unity in faith and doctrine. He adds: His Highness, the Prince, had settled on the Visitation at Luther's request "out of Christian charity and for God's sake, though this was not indeed required of him as a secular ruler."

These, however, were mere Platonic excuses by which he sought to reassure himself, to explain the contradictions involved in his position, and, probably, to defeat those who looked askance at this Visitation ordained by the State.

It is easy to perceive from the language of the Preface that one of the writer's objects was to meet the objections he feared from his own party. Among the ministers were some, who, it was to be apprehended, would "ungratefully and proudly despise" the action of the Prince; "madcaps, who out of utter malice cannot tolerate anything that is common and applies to all." These he reminds of the sovereign's powers of coercion by which they would be "sundered." Seemingly he also tries to defend himself from the very natural charge of having introduced an incompetent authority into the Church Visitation; this he does by limiting the sovereign power as we just heard him do. The charge, that the Instructions of the Visitors were untrue to his former doctrine (he means more particularly that of good works) he answers by a rhetorical assertion to the contrary.

He also thinks it necessary to defend the measures aimed at those whose belief is different; this he does by a reference to the "unity of the spirit," which sounds rather strange coming from

Luther." Holl says: "The two documents cannot be reconciled, for each attempts not merely to describe or emphasise one side of the matter, but to set forth the whole, and this they do from totally different points of view. One seeks to represent the Visitation as the outcome of the paternal care of the Elector, the other as an act of self-help on the part of the Church. It is impossible to harmonise these two points of view."

him. To the Catholics who were obliged to quit their country since, for the sake of peace, conformity was required, Luther sends the following greeting: "Be careful to keep, as Paul teaches, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and charity, Amen" (Eph. iv. 3).

When judging the Preface the fact must be taken into account that the "Unterricht" which Luther is launching on the public introduces amongst other things the office of the "super-attendents" (superintendents). In these directions coercion is defended in the strongest terms. Whoever preaches or teaches "against the Word of God," what is "conducive to revolt against the authorities," is to be "prohibited" from doing so by the Superintendent; if this be of no avail then the matter is to be "notified at once to the officer, in order that His Electoral Highness may take further steps." All this simply on the authority of the sovereign.

Hence had Luther really wished, as has been asserted, to protest against the powers claimed by the sovereign and his Visitors this should have been very differently worded.

The passage regarding the "super-attendent" in itself shows that Luther did not regard the "Unterricht" merely as a spiritual guide, as has been recently asserted, or as representing that purely spiritual function which, according to him, is concerned only with the conscience, with doctrine and advice, and knows nothing of any law or command. This naturally follows from the above, even though the elastic Preface contains a qualifying statement, viz. that he could not allow the directions in the "Unterricht to be issued as a strict law lest we set up new Papal Decretals"; it is his intention to send them forth as a "history or account, and also as a testimony and confession of our faith." In this, again, we can only see his desire to explain away the disagreeable expedient into which he had been forced by circumstances.

Since the beginning of the Church, he goes on, there had always been an episcopal Visitation though now this had ceased and "Christendom lay torn and distracted"; none of us (the Wittenberg Professors) having been called or definitely appointed to this, he had come "to play the part of conscience" and had moved the sovereign to take this step. In other words, no one on earth has the right to "constitute" new churches, not even the man who discovered the new Evangel; it was merely a venture on Luther's part, when, owing to the urgency of the case, he called in the assistance of the secular power. Such a mental process, is, to say the least, highly involved.

It is sufficiently evident that this Preface, inscribed, so to speak, over the portals of the new State-governed Church, may lay claim to great psychological interest.

The interest deepens if we turn our attention to the demonological ideas Luther here brings into play. At that

time he was suffering from the after-effects of his dreadful struggles with the "devil" (1527–28) and with his own conscience. That, here too, the devil might not be absent, he shows in the Preface how Satan had wrought all sorts of mischief amongst the Papists (this is Luther's consolation) by neglect of the Visitations, and had set up nothing but "spiritual delusions and monk-calves."[1] The "idle, lazy bellies" had been forced to serve Satan. He gives this warning for the future: "The Devil has not grown good or devout this year, nor will he ever do so." "Christ says in John viii. that the devil is a murderer."[2]

The words Luther uses when he characterises the intervention of the secular authorities in Church matters as merely a work of necessity or charity on the part of the chief member of the Church, are of psychological rather than of doctrinal importance.

What Luther says of the rights of the State authorities in Church affairs reveals how little his heart was in this abandonment of ecclesiastical authority to the secular arm. It shows the need he felt of concealing beneath fair words the road he had thus opened up to State-administration of the Church.[3] The Saxon Elector is a "Christian member"; he is a "Christian brother" in the Church, who, as sovereign, must play his part; his intervention here appears as a service performed by the ruler towards the Christian community. "Our emergency Bishop," such is the title Luther once bestows on Johann Frederick. The state of financial confusion amongst the Protestants is what chiefly demands, he says, that "His Electoral Highness, the embodiment of the secular authority, should look into and settle things."

[1] Reference to the title of his writing, "Deuttung . . . des Munchkalbs zu Freyberg," 1523. See above, vol. iii., p. 149 f.

[2] The latter saying occurs in the "Unterricht," Weim. ed., 26, p. 212; Erl. ed., 23, p. 28.

[3] There is no call to lay so much stress on the Preface as to be obliged to say with Holl, *ib.*, 54: It "necessarily assumes the significance of a silent protest. . . . Luther is defending the Church's independence of the State by painting the Visitation in its true light." Holl also says, p. 59, that Luther, here, entered upon "a struggle for the integrity of his whole work." "To him it was of vital importance whether the ruler of the land was obeyed as the highest member of the congregation, or as a Christian Prince." P. 60: "All the efforts directed to-day towards greater independence of the Church and larger liberty within the Church have a good right to appeal to Luther on this question."

On the other hand, it is not of his *secular* authority, but simply of his authority, that Luther speaks in the writing he addressed to the Elector on Nov. 22, 1526, where he appeals to him to make an end of the material and spiritual mischief by establishing "schools, pulpits and parsonages." He says, "Now that all spiritual order and restraint have come to an end in the principality and all the monasteries and institutions have fallen into the hands of Your Electoral Highness as the supreme head, this brings with it the duty and labour of regulating this matter, which no one else either can or ought to undertake." "God has in this case called and empowered Your Electoral Highness to do this."[1] The supervision of the doctrine as well as of the personal conduct of the ministers, and not merely the providing for their material wants, all come within the ordinary province of the "supreme head."

Divergent Currents

The psychological significance of Luther's hesitation to sanction the ruler's supremacy in church government lies in its affording us a fresh insight into the various drifts of his mind and temperament.

On the one hand, he helped to raise State-ecclesiasticism into the saddle, and, on the other, he would fain see it off again and looks at it with the unfriendliest of eyes. He not only gives us to understand in the most unmistakable manner that it is not his ideal, but, up to the very last, he says things of it which ring almost like an anathema; nor does he forbear to heap reproaches on the natural consequences of an institution of which notwithstanding he himself was the father. Only error, with its ambiguity and want of logic, combined with an obstinate will, could issue in such contradictions.

His earlier and truer recognition of the independence of the spiritual power refused to be entirely extinguished. It was the same here as with Luther's doctrine of faith alone, of justification and good works; again and again the old, wholesome views break out from under the crust of the new errors and, all involuntarily, find expression in quite

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 386 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406). See above, p. 581. The other passages mentioned here are quoted by P. Drews, *ib.*, pp. 95 ff., 98.

excellent moral admonitions. So too his former orthodox views concerning the dignity of the Bible are at variance with the liberties he takes with the Word of God, and, even according to Protestant divines, lead him to an ambiguous theory and to a practice full of contradictions.[1] Yet again, his call to make use of armed force against the Emperor is contrary to what he had taught for long years regarding the unlawfulness of such resistance ; the disquiet and perturbation, the consciousness of this causes him he seeks to drown beneath ever louder battle cries.[2] We find something similar throughout the whole field of his psychology : everywhere we can detect gainstriving currents.

In the questions bearing on the rights of the State and the Church, his temperament, which was so susceptible to sudden changes, needed only some strong impulse from without in order to bring to light one or other of these opposing trends. One powerful stimulus of the sort was afforded by the attractive outlook of bettering the frightful condition of the Lutheran congregations in Saxony, making his disputed cause victorious, and at the same time getting rid of the remaining Papists. By this alluring prospect he was taken captive. It would seem to have led him to shut his eyes to the iron fetters which State supremacy in Church matters would forge about his Church system not merely in Saxony but far beyond its borders. When, afterwards, he would willingly have retraced his steps, it was already too late. He was condemned to make statements extolling freedom in spiritual matters, the futility of which was plain to himself, and which, therefore, Protestants should not take so seriously as some of them do.

It is not sufficiently realised how such opposing tendencies run side by side from the very outset of his career.

Even in his " An den christlichen Adel," in spite of the violence with which he incites the nobility against the Church's administration we can see that he wishes to set his new allies more against the alleged " robberies and exactions " of the Church and the abuses which he supposed to be beyond remedy, than against the Church as such. It is true, that, by his universal priesthood, he breaks down the walls which mark the field of her sway ; God can speak " through the mouth of any pious man against the Pope " ; " in principle every Christian has the right to summon

[1] See above, vol. iv., pp. 413 and 418 f., for the corroborative statements of Scheel and Seeberg. [2] Vol. iii., pp. 48 ff. and 58 ff.

a Council" ;[1] but, should the secular powers gather together the Council he desired, they would, according to him, do so simply at the will and command of the Christian congregation which he also takes into account and which he admits possesses a certain spiritual "sword" which exists side by side with the secular sword, though only for the benefit of souls. Thus the spiritual power still exists as a dream. Only a Christian ruler, a "brother Christian, brother priest and sharer in the same spirit-world" may demand that violent reformation for which Luther yearns.[2]— Thus, even in this stormy work, the two contrary drifts are to some extent discernible.

With the same desire to retain intact some sort of spiritual order distinct from the secular, Luther here and elsewhere seeks to reserve to the Christian congregation the right of choosing their pastors ; circumstances were, however, to prove too strong for him.

"Throughout Christendom things should be so ordered that every town chooses from amongst its congregation a learned and pious burgher, commits to him the office of pastor and sees that he is given enough for his upkeep."[3] The congregation is also to have the right to depose him should his preaching not turn out in accordance with the Word of God. What Luther has in mind is united action on the part of all the true believers. But here, again, he has perforce to lean rather on the authorities. For, in the congregation, we have first of all the Town-Council, which, even when only a minority of the burghers is in favour of the religious reform, receives from Luther a power which does not belong to it, viz. of seeing that the people it rules are supplied with the right preachers. Above the Council, moreover, stands the supreme authority, viz. the sovereign. The latter must naturally assist the Council in choosing good Evangelical preachers and must himself take steps when dissensions cause the Council to refuse to move. Luther, again, will do nothing in opposition to the Court ; for instance, he will not allow any pastor to enter upon his office who is not a "*persona grata*" at the Court, even though he should have been duly called by the congregation.[4] Every parish is indeed independent by divine right, but the prince also acts by divine right when, as protector and defender, he intervenes, regardless of the traditional rights of patron and warden, etc.[5]

[1] See Holl, *ib.*, p. 9, with a reference to "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 289 (Weim. ed., 6, p. 413), on the Christian who, according to Mt. xviii., summons the culprit before the congregation : "If I am to accuse him before the congregation, I must first assemble the congregation."

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 413 ; Erl. ed., 21, p. 290.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 440=322. Holl, *ib.*, p. 16. It is to Holl's credit that he so strongly emphasises this tendency of Luther's in favour of the independent rights of the congregation.

[4] Cp. his letter to Spalatin, May 29, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 378 f. : "*Faciat princeps et aula hac in re quod voluerint, ego Spiritui sancto non resistam ipsi viderint.*" See also "Briefwechsel," 3, pp. 381 and 561.

[5] C. Muller, *ib.*, p. 54, who emphasises Luther's bias towards the

In Saxony, where the ruler was favourable to Lutheranism, his authority was indispensable for the establishment of the Church. On the other hand, where the conditions were less favourable to Luther, there, according to his "*De instituendis ministris*," the principal work must devolve on the town councillors and the patrons as well as on the preachers appointed by them to the congregations;[1] to these it falls to elect bishops, so that everything may be put on independent ecclesiastical lines.—Thus Luther was not so averse to changing both methods and principles.

The change in Luther's views comes out most clearly in the leave he gives to the highest secular power to annul the choice made by the congregation. The instructions for the Visitation prescribed that, on the bare authority of the prince and regardless of the rights of the congregation, those pastors who taught what was erroneous or who had proved otherwise unsatisfactory were to be deposed and replaced by others. This held even of those who were strongly backed by their congregation. "In point of fact," says Carl Müller, "this was practically to shift the responsibility from the congregation and its authorities to the sovereign. It is also clear, that, where there was a divergency of opinion concerning the orthodoxy of a preacher, the sovereign naturally had his own way."[2] But, even before this, Luther had refused to sanction the demand of the Erfurt burghers, viz. that the parishes should themselves appoint their pastors even against the wishes of the Town-Council; it was "seditious," so he wrote in 1525, "that the parishes should seek to choose or dismiss their pastors regardless of the Council."[3] Here the Council happened to be on his side; where this was not the case, Luther was just as ready to set aside its rights in favour of those of the ruler.

In this wise the right of the congregation to elect its pastor, a right which he had once praised so highly, even in his own day was so whittled away as to become quite meaningless. Of the two tendencies which had been apparent in him from the first, one inclining towards the authorities and the other towards freedom of election, the former had won the day.

We already know that Luther inclined for a long while to the establishment of a Church-Apart or assembly of true believers. Yet, at the same time, he was working for a National Church, albeit he was convinced that such a Church would for the most part be composed of non-Christians. Eventually the latter was to hold the field owing to the force of outward circumstances.[4]

He was in favour of a Church which should be entirely free, and at the same time of a confessional Church with binding

State government of the Church with as much reason as Holl (see above, p. 596, n. 3) does his ideas on the independence of the Church.

[1] Müller, *ib.*, p. 61. [2] P. 79.
[3] Vol. ii., p. 358. [4] Cp. above, pp. 135 f., 139 f.

dogmas. So strongly did he stand for freedom in all ecclesiastical matters that he not only refused to recognise the existence of any spiritual "authority" among his followers, but also declared no Pope, no angel, no man had the power to rob the faithful of this freedom or to impose anything on him.[1] At the same time, however, he was in favour of that strict disciplinary government which finds its expression in the regulations for the Visitation.

According to Luther there is no real Canon Law. He refuses to recognise State and Church as two bodies which exist side by side.[2] And yet he complains of the way in which the rights of the Church, i.e. of his Church, were being thwarted by the lawyers.[3]

He wished a distinction to be drawn between the Prince and the Christian, and declared: "His princely authority has nothing to do with his Christianity"; and yet he himself united the spiritual and the secular power in the prince's hands so closely that they were never afterwards to be wrenched apart. As Carl Müller truly remarks, we must not "press too much the term 'emergency bishop for the time being' which Luther applies to the secular ruler."[4]

True to one of his ruling tendencies, he based on the Bible the rights and duties of the authorities in every department of the spiritual sphere. "If the authorities do not wish it, then neither must you." Nevertheless, almost in the same breath, he scoffs at the claims of the authorities when they did not happen to fall in with his wishes, or when they proved an obstacle to the expulsion of Popery: "Why pay attention to him [the Elector]? He has no right to command except in worldly things."[5]

He stood for the Consistories and promoted their establishment in spite of Spalatin's objections; and yet, on the other hand, he opposed them, saying, that the Courts were after ruling the Churches as they pleased, and that Satan was bent on introducing the secular power into the Church.[6] Hence, from about 1540, he attempted to set up Protestant bishops as in the case of Nicholas Amsdorf.[7] The

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 536. "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 68. "De capt. babylonica."
[2] Cp. Holl, *ib.*, p. 19 f. Müller, *ib.*, p. 74 ff. See above, 55 f.
[3] See below, p. 602 f. [4] P. 77. [5] See above, vol. ii., p. 329.
[6] Cp. above, p. 181 ff. [7] See above, p. 191.

Consistories displeased him and made life unbearable. Still, because the ecclesiastical edifice he had erected could not do without them, he bridled his tongue ; very different is the picture of Luther from that of the champions of the Church's independence in the early days of Christianity, for instance, Ambrose or Chrysostom, who, regardless of self, staked all they had in the struggle against the oppressors of the Church. His habit of making the naughty lawyers of the Court the butt of his complaints is significant enough, for the really responsible party was the Court itself and the Elector in person, who used his newly acquired power to rule more autocratically in Church matters than any Pope had ever done.

Conclusion

The prince did not rule as a member of a religious commonwealth which also had rights of its own, but rather as one holding the highest powers of the episcopate ; he nominated the pastors and provided for their support ; he watched over the lives and behaviour of the clergy, and, at Luther's instance, took proceedings against the false teachers and the remnants of Popery ; he alone controlled the consistory which acted in his name ; matrimonial cases were already being dealt with by his lawyers and the disposal and management of the property which had formerly belonged to the Church depended entirely on the Court. The right of the congregations " to appoint and dismiss preachers and to pronounce on doctrine " seemed now forgotten. If a layman dared to call a preacher to task the authorities were bound to take proceedings against him for disturbance of the public peace and order.

Not that Luther hesitated to complain or express his displeasure with the State-Church system whenever he found it in his way, or when he saw Catholic princes make use of his principles, or when he thought the cause of the new religion compromised. On such occasions we hear him bewailing : " The worldly rulers, the princes, kings and nobles throughout the land, not to speak of the magistrates in the villages, want to wield the sword of the Word and teach the pastors how and what they are to preach and how they must govern their Churches. But do you boldly say to such : You fool, you brainless dolt, look to your own calling and don't try to preach ; leave that to your pastor." He declares in the same way : " The secular government does not extend over the conscience, though there are many crazy princes

who seek to raise their power and influence over the welkin itself and even to rule consciences, also to settle what is to be believed or not; yet, the worldly power has only to do with that which reason grasps."[1]

He considered that the interests of his new Church were endangered when, in 1533, the Hessian theologians advocated the enforcement of the greater excommunication by the sovereign; he saw in this a real peril in the then state of things; he wrote: "I would not have the temporal authorities meddle in this office; they should let it be, in order that the real distinction between the two powers be upheld (' *ut staret vera et certa distinctio utriusque potestatis* ')."[2]

But where in the domain of Protestantism at that time, was there to be found any real ecclesiastical ruler who could act with "power"?

The only factor that kept his anger from breaking forth was his consciousness that he owed everything he had achieved to the ruler of the land. But "at heart he saw only too well," remarks a Protestant Church-historian whom we have repeatedly quoted, "that the Princes, under the cloak of the Christian name which they did not deserve to bear, were solely intent on their own aggrandisement when they laid their hands on ecclesiastical authority. He also saw that he himself, in his 'Unterricht,' was to blame for this."[3] Hence it is all the stranger to hear Luther declaring when at odds with the officials, that they must never tire of "insisting, impressing, urging and driving home the distinction between the secular and the spiritual rule . . . for the troublesome devil will not cease cooking and brewing up the two kingdoms together." And yet we have heard him say that the two should form "one cake."[4]

Concerning his attitude towards the authorities some recent theologians of his own camp have expressed themselves very differently from what might have been expected:

"Thus, with Luther, the end tallies with the beginning," they write; "everything has been thought out clearly and is in perfect agreement."

And similarly: "The principles which guided him [in his scheme and arrangement of the Visitation] are precisely the same as appear in his earlier writings." "It is evident that Luther's opinions, though ever in a state of growth, were yet in their fundamental lines always the same."

The opinion expressed by another Protestant theologian comes closer to the truth; he declares openly: The want of logic in Luther's mode of thought is perhaps "nowhere more apparent than in his views on the authorities and their duty towards religion. . . . It will never be possible to get away from the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 46, p. 184.

[2] To Tileman Schnabel, etc., June 26, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 317.

[3] P. Drews, *ib.*, p. 101 f. [4] P. 580.

contradictions in his theory and between his theory and his practice."[1]

It only remains to add, that, of the diverging currents, that one is always the strongest which seems most likely to promote his work, the diffusion of his doctrine and the growth of his Church. A glance at the weather-cock of expediency will tell us which tendency we may expect to find predominant, for, as a rule, it is the prospect of success that decides him. At the same time it must be admitted, that, in his zeal for his cause, he is at times hardly aware of the extent to which he is proving untrue to his original plans.

The present-day observer of such vacillation even in matters so far-reaching and fundamental will naturally ask himself how it was that Luther's fickleness failed to discourage his followers. The answer is, however, not far to seek. He himself, as a general rule, concealed the actual state of the case under the veil of his eloquence, and his partisans were either not aware of how things really stood or else followed him with a blind enthusiasm for the common aims and the common struggle which all his changes and contradictions could not avail to quench. This was the origin of the picture which so many German Protestants cherish of Luther. To them he was a champion of the Church and the State, faithful to his principles to the last. Such a portrait differs widely from that which the historian draws from an impartial study of Luther's writings and correspondence.[2]

[1] Wilhelm Hans, quoted in full, vol. ii., p. 312. What he says is corroborated by Emil Friedberg, the authority of law, who, speaking of the work of Carl Müller so often quoted above, says, that it is a "difficult business to determine Luther's views," since they are not always the same in his various writings, and since, under stress of circumstances, Luther sometimes said things that went directly against the principles elsewhere advocated by him." "Deutsche Zeitschr. f. KR.," 20, 1911, p. 414.

[2] The vacillation which characterised Luther's attitude towards the State-Church system and which came from his early ideas concerning the true Christians who had no need of any authority over them, has recently been set forth as follows by the Protestant lawyer and historian Gustav v. Schulthess-Rechberg: "Luther's true Christians were Utopian persons and hence his Church was the same. In his idealistic confidence in God he had expected too much from them. And thus there came for his Reformation an era of hesitancy and groping, which refused for a while to make way for more stable conditions. The Church which Luther had characterised as a necessary expedient for

A Protestant Church-historian, H. Hermelink, recently attempted to place Luther side by side with the "greatest politicians" of our nation.[1] Although worldly diplomacy and organisation were not Luther's strong point, still there is much truth in this idea. All that we have said tends to confirm this, though possibly not quite in the sense intended by Hermelink. At the same time what Carl Müller says is also not without its justification: "Luther lacked an insight into the character of the secular government, which, once it has been pushed in a given direction, cannot be

furthering the kingdom of God on earth now itself needed to be assisted and supported from without, if it was to suffice for its task. To achieve this we find Luther leaving no means untried. But his schemes were not very satisfactory. He put a patch here and another one there, appealed to the princes and then to the peasants, seeking to curry favour of one and the other simply for the sake of some small concession and in order to interest them in his Church. . . . At last Luther thought he had found a remedy: this was that the Church should seek support in the secular power. When quite at the end of his resources he had begun to remind the princes of their duties as rulers. From mere occasional allusions he soon passed on to energetic admonitions addressed to the 'great ones,' accompanied by his customary threats and abuse. It had indeed gone against the grain to summon the authorities to carry out his wishes, hence, at every opportunity, he insists on his independence of them. . . . Luther had in the event to submit to reproaches which he could not always honestly shift on to the shoulders of the 'false priestlings and factious spirits.'"

Of Luther's later years Schulthess-Rechberg says: "An era dawns when Luther can no longer see an ounce of good in the State; when he even tells the unworthy servant of God [the prince] to mind his own business. It is then that we find Luther declaring that the secular authorities have no power to watch over souls or to exercise the teaching office, that they have no authority over the clergy, etc. Here we see plainly how he, more than any other reformer, was driven by force of circumstances, and this again is a proof that Luther's work was really more than he had bargained for. Luther . . . never succeeded in viewing the relations between Church and State objectively. This and his constant efforts to disengage himself from Rome frequently gave an unexpected turn to his views. For instance, when he insists at times that heresy and unbelief do not concern the authorities (Erl. ed., 22, pp. 90, 93). Hardly has he said this than he finds himself compelled to hedge and practically to eat his words." "Luther, Zwingli und Calvin," etc (above, p. 573, n. 4), pp. 170–172.

[1] In an article against P. Drews ("Zeitschr. f. KG.," 29, 1908, p. 478 ff.), p. 488. Hermelink adds: (p. 489) "It is true that the system of an established Church did not correspond with Luther's ideal, but it was a political necessity and therefore seemed to him willed by God." Hermelink's reference to the false ideals and eschatology which influenced Luther's theory of Church and State may be admitted as in part correct. He is also right when he says: Luther, according to his frequent statement, wished to assemble the Christians from the kingdom of Antichrist before the end of the world. *Ib.*, p. 313.

expected to stand still at the point which he fixes as the limit of its powers. Thus the longer he lived the more reason he had to complain of the lawyers, and, when he was dead, the process went on even further."[1]

[1] "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," p. 81.

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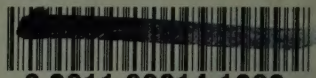
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